WORLD / A22

Love-crazed astronaut out on bail; ordered to stay away from her romantic rival

WORLD / A22

3rd letter bomb in 3 days explodes in Britain, hurts 4

LIVING STARS / H6

Carmi Martin, the actress who's also a home stylist, lives in virtual art gallery

SPORTS / A24

Mamiit-led RP Davis Cuppers favored vs Pakistanis

see Page G4

Salceda appointed Palace chief of staff

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A FORMER STUDENT OF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's at the Ateneo de Manila University is to become her main Palace aide.

Rep. Jose Ma. Sarte "Joey" Salceda, the 39-year-old solon mockingly dubbed as the main architect of the President's fiscal reform program, has been appointed the new Presidential Chief of Staff.

SALCEDA, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Friday, February 9, 2007 ★★ 9 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 63 P18 [illegible] www.inquirer.net

This is news: Man bites dog; dog bites back

WELLINGTON, NEW Zealand—When bites dog; dog bites back.

That was the sequence when Alastair Pollock dog Edgar cornered two suspects on a rooftop after a grocery store robbery in Napier, New Zealand's police [illegible]

[illegible], A11

JV out of UNO; Roco in

ROCO: Like Abraham's sacrifice

Erap: A painful decision to ensure opposition unity

By Norman Bordadora and Jerome Aning

SAN JUAN MAYOR JOSEPH VICTOR "JV" EJERCITO is pulling out of the senatorial race, and Raul Roco's widow appears to be in line to take his slot in the United Opposition (UNO) ticket.

Ousted President Joseph Estrada himself said yesterday that he had convinced Ejercito, his son by former actress Guia Gomez, to drop his plan of running for a Senate seat and instead seek reelection in the family bailiwick of San Juan.

Asked who he wanted to take his son's place in the slate, Estrada said UNO's selection committee had plenty of "principled opposition(ists) to choose from."

But he singled out Sonia Roco, the widow of the two-time presidential candidate and former senator, he praised: "She is an example of a principled opposition(ist). She has said that she can't in conscience run under [the administration's] Unity ticket because her late husband was one of those who had called on Ms Arroyo to resign."

"I think this move is very admirable. It reminds me of Abraham sacrificing his son. That sacrifice is going to immensely benefit the opposition," Roco told the Inquirer last night.

"The whole idea of coming up with a united opposition gives the electorate a sense of credibility that the opposition function is to rally to demand accountability, transparency and honest governance for their past service record. This can be tested in the election," Roco told the Inquirer when sought for her reaction to Estrada's move.

She said Estrada's offer for her to join the United Opposition was relayed to her by Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay through lawyer Lorna Kapunan, an official of Aksyon Demokratiko, her late husband's party.

An Estrada camp insider, who

JV OUT, A6

EJERCITO bows to father's wish

First day in the life of prisoner No. 517

By Tarra Quismundo and Leila B. Salaverria

ON HIS FIRST NIGHT IN JAIL, former Barangay Gov. Antonio "Tony" Leviste slept on the lower deck of a double-bunk bed, the only space he could get inside a cell crammed with more than 70 occupants.

In the company of crime suspects whose fates were uncertain as his, the 67-year-old businessman spent Day 2 of his incarceration at the Bilibid City Jail (MCJ) while awaiting trial for the unbailable charge of murder the state filed against him for the fatal shooting of his aide Rafael de los Kios.

While in a place all too different, two crowded for the millionaire businessman, MCJ detainee No. 517 chose to go to sleep inside Selda Tres (Cell No. 3), requesting before he was locked up that his family not visit him yet.

"Since he got there last night, my lawyer visited him yesterday [because] Dad requested us not to go with him," his youngest daughter Toni said in a press briefing yesterday afternoon.

"(At least for the first day, [we should] just visit him so that he can, I guess, suffer on his own,

FIRST DAY, A8

ALL IN THE FAMILY, and then some. With mom, former President Cory Aquino and youngest sister Kris in attendance wearing the family color, Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III files his certificate of candidacy for senator at the Comelec on Thursday. Flanking the Aquinos are Sen. Mar Roxas (left) and James Yap, Kris' husband. LYNN NOLASCO

'NO DONE DEAL'

It's Friday, Wednesday Group still out

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

THE REPORTED PLAN OF SENATORS Ralph Recto and Jinkee Arroyo to join the administration's Team Unity ticket is not a done deal, according to Senate President Manuel Villar, their colleague in the Wednesday Group.

"That's not final yet. Everything is pure speculation at this time. We're still talking, and we have not closed the door to any possibility," Villar yesterday told reporters at the Senate session hall.

He added that any decision by the members of the Wednesday Group was to be finalized last night.

Recto himself said in a text message that contrary to the announcement of Speaker Jose de Venecia, he had not made any plans to join the administration slate.

"No decision yet. I did not appoint anyone to speak for me. I will make my own formal announcement if" Recto said.

Arroyo could not be reached for comment at press time.

But Sen. Edgardo Angara, who had earlier accepted the administration's invitation to join Team Unity, said his information was that Recto and Arroyo were "in the bag."

"As far as I know, they're part of it," Angara said.

Villar, Recto and Arroyo, together with Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, comprise the Senate Wednesday Group.

IT'S FRIDAY, A6

Senate raps Gonzalez, Puno over Iloilo assault

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE HAS RECOMMENDED the censure of Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, his undersecretary and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez over the "premature enforcement" of the Ombudsman's dismissal order against Iloilo Governor Niel Tupas Sr. last month.

The Senate committees on public order and local government also recommended that the Commission on Human Rights investigate, identify and prosecute the 200 members of the raiding team led by Chief Supt. Wilfredo Daley of the Regional Mobile Group (RMG).

The committees made the recommendations in a report of their inquiry into the Jan. 17 violent police assault on the capitol that marred the move to serve the order on Tupas.

The chamber adopted the report late Wednesday night.

The assault, highlighted by TV images of policemen in full battle gear training their guns on the governor's supporters and smashing glass panels at the capitol, caused a furor among lawmakers, particularly Tupas' party mates in the Liberal Party.

Only when the Court of Appeals in Cebu City issued a 60-day temporary restraining order on the enforcement of the dismissal order did the assault stop.

The Ombudsman had ordered the dis-

SENATE, A17

Malik: General, Sulu execs raised money

By Fe Zamora

PARAMACO, SULU—MORO NATIONAL Liberation Front leader Usturi Malik and yesterday that Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Sulu Rep. Munir Arbison and Sulu Gov. Ben Loong helped put together the P550,000 in "goodwill money" that Malik accepted before Dolorfino and his men left this camp last week.

He said that Col. Demetrio Encinas of Task Force Comet and Mayor Hut Asmodon of Lugus town also helped raise the goodwill money.

"To thot the ransom money? You better ask those people," Malik said.

Dolorfino, Undersecretary for Peace Reconciliation and 10 other government officials and soldiers were in the MNLF camp in Panamao on Friday to discuss the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement between the MNLF and the government.

After the initial talks, Dolorfino and his group prepared to leave but Malik said he urged them to stay overnight. The group then spent two nights in the camp.

MALIK, A10

THE "HOST" WITH THE MOSTEST. Habier Malik, MNLF commander, kept his guests well-fed as well as well-guarded over 58 hours inside his sprawling stronghold in Barangay Bitan-ag, Panamao, Sulu

First female hostage in Nigeria is Filipina

LAGOS—A FILIPINO WOMAN and a Frenchman became the latest kidnap victims in the oil-rich Niger Delta when they were seized in two separate incidents on Wednesday in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's oil capital, industry sources said yesterday.

The Filipina was identified as Josie Beth Orozco, 37, of San Jose, Mindoro Occidental, who is married to the Iranian general manager of Bladipan International Co. Ltd.

She was seized by armed men around midday close to a bank on Ibadan Road in the city center. The assailants immediately switched off her phone and took her to an unknown destination, police sources said.

"She was probably on her way to the bank. She was taken close to a bank," Felix Ogbuehi, a state police commissioner, said.

"As far as I know this is the first-ever female hostage in Nigeria, certainly in the last two years," a private security adviser said, agreeing with Ogbuehi that the abduction's timing and location were unusually audacious.

Wednesday's attacks followed the abduction Tuesday of a Filipino employee of Petco Petrochemicals who was seized from a company car heading for the airport in Owerri, the capital of Imo State.

The latest two incidents bring to 26 the number of Filipinos or nationals being held hostage in southern Nigeria. The other 24 were seized from a cargo vessel in Nigerian waters in January.

The past five weeks have seen

FIRST FEMALE, A13

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 (Tue/Fri): 23 25 | 6 8 9 | 1 5 4
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WEATHER FORECAST

Cavite mayor in hot water

Sedition raps eyed vs exec for closing police station

By Alexis Pape, Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon and Norman Bordadora

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL Police is considering charging Mayor Jessie Carrillo of Bacoor, Cavite with sedition for closing down the town's police station and seizing police vehicles and radios.

"The PNP Legal Service is now studying what we can do to ensure it is against the law to prevent our officers from doing his or her functions," PNP Spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said yesterday.

EVICTED. Policemen hold office seal side the station in Bacoor, Cavite. The order to close down the station came from the mayor. EDWIN BACASMAS

Bacoor standoff

Pagdilao said the Revised Penal Code defined sedition as "preventing the national government, any of its officers or any of its officers to freely perform and administer its functions."

The Department of the Interior and Local Government also said earlier "appropriate charges" would be filed against Carrillo if he interrupts police actions or worse seize.

Interior Undersecretary for Local Government Marianito Andaman told the Inquirer that an investigation into the Bacoor standoff was being monitored despite Carrillo's decision to suspend the police station.

Tension gripped Bacoor as members of the local police station were forced to hold office on the sidewalks for 20 hours after Carrillo ordered their headquarters and closed five other detachments positioned on Wednesday night to protect what he said was an attempt of his political rival, Gen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. to replace the entire local police force.

Carrillo, a known close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, had also recalled all runaway cadres, police vehicles and other equipment that the municipal government "lent" to the police station.

Padlocked

In a memorandum, the mayor ordered the policemen to vacate the police station and remove all the equipment that the municipality provided for them even as he instructed his lawyers how it down.

Aside from being the office of the 99-strong Bacoor police force, the bungalow building, located a few meters away from the municipal hall, also has a holding jail for arrested persons.

At around 8 p.m., the mayor's aides ordered if the police station and locked its doors from using padlocks and chains. Some 200 supporters of the mayor swooped in the area to show of support.

But the stunned policemen heeded the order and took down things out of the building.

The police officers were eventually allowed to return and make use of the building at around 2 p.m. yesterday.

Carrillo said his actions were prompted by the move of Revilla to replace the chief of police, Chief Insp. Alex Bucu, along with other police personnel, to influence the outcast of the local elections in the area.

He claimed the plan was to control the police force in favor of the actor-politician's brother, Strike Revilla, who will run as mayor.

Revilla denied the allegations.

Carrillo, now on his third and last term, is reportedly bidding his wife to succeed him post.

"They've done this to me in 2001 when the wife of then Gen. Bong Revilla [actress Lani Mercado] ran against me. They used the policemen to harass [my supporters]," Carrillo said.

'We care, but ...'

Andaman did not specify the charges that could be leveled against Carrillo. "I told him that we care for him because he made Jinwalker lawyers win in his area, but if he will not withdraw his [motives], we will have to be hook at him," he said.

Charges, he said, might be filed against Carrillo before the Ombudsman but unless his violations was related to the Anti-Graft Law, no sanctions would be implemented.

The Omnibus Election Code provides that sanctions on election officials during the election period can not be meted out unless the charge is grave enough.

Pagdilao said PNP chief Hir. Gen. Oscar Calderon had ordered an investigation and asst. Chief Supt. Nicasio Rodriguez, Region 4-A commander, to talk to Carrillo.

He also said Bacoor Chief of Police Sosa did not inform his superior of the true score for the closure of the police station. "Sus, Boy's might also face administrative charges if found to have failed to report Carrillo's order immediately to his superiors, Pagdilao said.

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PLEA BARGAIN

Atong Ang sticks to story on Erap

By Norman Bordadora

ANG

CHARLIE "ATONG" ANG WILL STICK TO HIS story that he delivered P130 million to businessman Jaime Ongpin in 1998 to Sen. President Joseph Estrada.

Ang's lawyers asked the Sandiganbayan not to grant Estrada's demand that Ang drop the admission he made in his plea bargain deal with the government in exchange for Estrada's acquittal in the agreement.

Ang is a co-accused in the state's plunder case against Estrada.

In a manifestation filed before the Sandiganbayan on Monday, Ang's lawyers Ruth Castro and Alfredo Villamor said Estrada's lawyers have begun wearing was appealing to the sympathy of the antigraft court's Special Division instead of wasting up with the basis for rescinding this deal the way Estrada wanted.

"Ongpin's statement on the deal was also voluntarily given to the satisfaction of this Honorable Court and appearing clear deal's approved when it said. A new agreement should be prepared, as a matter of plain and simple justice," Castro and Villamor said.

"It even summoned a threat when it said in the supplemental comment that 'Such admission must be expunged, along with the alleged conspiracy with President Erap, and this Ang will yet be home here," they added.

Arguing back said Estrada's lawyers would no longer question the plea bargain agreement if the document was rewarded to say that Ang did not admit to the "predicate charges" in the information filed against him and Estrada.

He also asked that Ang's admission of conspiring with Estrada to take the P130 million to remove stolen limit from Erap but pertinent be deleted as well.

In his comment to the plea bargain, Sandiganbayan's prosecutor, put Estrada in a hard light and should be dismissed if they may no longer be used against the ex-new President in his plunder case which has been put to rest and a semi-popular Sandiganbayan's verdict.

Sandiganbayan the admissions will be part of judicial records and will be used by future students of the law.

"The initial apprehension that the plea bargain agreement is detrimental to statehood interests, albeit baseless and unfounded, had already been addressed," Ang's lawyers said.

In open court, the Sandiganbayan's prosecution and government panelists last said the admissions contained in the plea bargain agreement would not be used against Estrada unless Ang were subpoenaed to a cross-examination.

There was no need to delete the dates in Ang's plea bargain, according to Villamor and Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio, since the statements would not be used as evidence against Estrada.

As to Ingcong's demand that information that tended to put Estrada in a bad light be removed as the plea bargain agreement would be made part of court records that would be studied by law students, Villa-Ignacio said the documents was no different from others presented against Estrada in the trial.

"The entire plunder trial will go down in the country's [judicial] records and it contains information against Mr. Estrada," he said.

Villamor, Ang's lawyer, had said that Ang's admission of wrongdoing with Estrada is "direct" the P130 million was the basis for Mr. Estrada's plea bargain agreement with the government.

Under the deal, Ang would plead guilty to the lesser crime of exempting a public official to exchange for testifying to cases he had personal knowledge of and the recovery of the P130 million he took from the P130 million in tobacco taxes.

May polls also a battle for party-list control

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE BATTLE LINES FOR THE MAY polls are being drawn with the administration's aggressive and large-lyunconventional efforts to court the support of the country's marginalized sectors notably comprising the party-list system in Congress.

Party-list lawmakers yesterday admitted that the coalition elections were not just a battle for local and national elective posts, but also for control of the party-list bloc in the House of Representatives.

To counter this move, leftist groups Partido ng Manggagawa, Anakpawis, Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Akbayan are seeking 40 host three-seats each.

Speaker Jose de Venecia himself declared that the administration's quest has persistent counting of party-list groups was now in full blast.

The Speaker announced last Wednesday that Lakas-CMD had already signed an alliance with seven party-list organizations representing 14 million voters.

The party-list groups that signed the "Covenant of Common Purpose and United Action" were the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives, Sunil Farmers Party, Alliance of Volunteer Educators, Seniority Freedom Party, Coop-Natcond Confederation of Cooperatives, Ang Lahan ng Indigenous Filipino and Abagad.

He said the list was later increased to 11 but did not elaborate.

De Venecia said the groups pledged to "lend mutual support" to each party in order to "ensure collective victory" for their candidates in the May elections.

"They also agreed to create a coordinating committee to build mechanism for mutual support for their political and legislative advocacies," he said.

"With a combined membership of 14 million, the seven party-list groups have a known voting strength of seven million, making the new alliance a formidable force at the local and national levels in the May 14 elections," said the Speaker.

This marked the third time in two weeks that Lakas had "rallied" gained new members or forged new alliances to "a unnamed campaign to advance the party's "wide-ranging reform agenda," he said.

In the biggest coup so far this year, 12 governors took their oath two weeks ago in new Lakas ceremony here before De Venecia, adding muscle to the party's machinery and giving Lakas control of important political provinces.

"Overall, we remain committed to reform politics, free market, free press and free elections, the ideals of Christian-Muslim ideology and democracy, and the environmental requirements of our dear Planet Earth," said De Venecia.

The opposition-leaning militant groups Bayan Muna, Gabriela and Anakpawis, which currently hold six seats, are looking at 9 to 15 seats in the next 14th Congress, and three each for Akbayan and Partido Manggagawa.

The Partido ng Manggagawa filed its manifestation to run in the coming May elections yesterday at the Commission on Elections.

Cops acting as politicians' bodyguards to be arrested

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (PNP) leadership warned yesterday that it would arrest and jail any policeman caught serving as private bodyguard of any politician seeking public office in the May elections.

PNP Chief Director General Oscar Calderon yesterday ordered the PNP Intelligence Group to "identify, validate and neutralize the illegal acts of some policemen acting as personal security and bodyguards of politicians."

"The PNP is a professional organization and it will not allow its members to be used in partisan politics," Calderon said.

He also ordered the PNP IG to monitor security agencies owned by politicians and prevent them from acting as the "private armies" of any candidate.

Calderon said the PNP will prevent any employee of security agencies to intimidate, coerce, and harass anyone to influence the result of the election.

The PNP Chief reminded all regional commanders to make sure their policemen follow the PNP's guidelines on the elections. Regional commanders are heads of their respective regional Task Force HOPE Ocoson, Orderly and Peaceful Elections] units.

The PNP has been given sole responsibility by the Commission on Elections to secure the coming elections.

BACK IN HARNESS
A miner watches as a giant drill breaks up stone in the pit of the Lafayette mine on Bagu-Bagu island in Albay. Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes (inset) ordered yesterday the reopening of the mine following months of suspension caused by two cyanide spills. (See story on Page B4)

House adopts Senate version of antiterrorism bill in bicam

By TJ Burgonio

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY MOVED a step closer to enacting the antiterror bill into law after the House of Representatives adopted en toto the Senate version, which carried more safeguards against possible abuses by law enforcers.

Mere hours an hour after convening the bicameral conference committee, the House panel led by Rep. Ebenezer Tatamansing agreed to adopt Senate Bill No. 2137, a move that pleased its Senate counterparts chaired by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

The measure last night ratified the bicameral committee report on the agreement that the House failed to do the same last night for lack of quorum.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. hailed the House decision to adopt the Senate version, which he said was thoroughly reviewed.

"If the mine fists, while we need an antiterrorism law, this should be balanced with the need to protect the rights of the people," he told reporters.

"I can live with it. Hindi naman it a crime to criticize the country," Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor of the anti-terror task force said in a text message.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., who introduced a raft of amendments, said the good thing about it was that the bill, if enacted into law, would be enforced after the May 14 elections, and that it would be subjected to periodic review.

Both the Senate and the House versions prescribe life imprisonment for convicted terrorists, three days of detention of suspects without an arrest warrant or formal charges, and the promulgation of terror organizations, among other salient features.

But the Senate version carried more safeguards, like imposing a penalty on law enforcers who violate the rights of a suspect and prescribing a P500,000 per day compensation for every day of detention to any person wrongfully detained, according to Tatamansing.

It also contained a definition of terrorists, and specified the acts constituted terrorism, he said.

"While the house version is a very good bill, there are additional safeguards introduced to the Senate version, that's why we accepted it en toto," Tatamansing said.

The compensation for wrongful detention was "a very good safeguard because any erring officers would think many times [before arresting and detaining a suspect] because of the possibility of answering for that kind of atrocity," he said.

Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo said he agreed with the Senate version but reiterated that the law was not necessary now.

"We take the position that the law is not necessary because there are existing laws... and particularly there's always this dangle of it being abused," he said.

Enrile, sponsor of the measure, said the bill carried a lot of safeguards against the abuse of human rights and would make "it easier for enforcers" to operate against terror groups in the country.

Under the bill, terrorism is defined as an act punishable under the Revised Penal Code and under other laws "with the conditions of sowing and creating a condition of widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace in order to coerce the government to give in to an unlawful demand."

The bill's other salient features were that the surveillance, interception and recording of communications would require authorization from a division of the Court of Appeals upon application by a law enforcer authorized by the Anti-Terrorism Council.

The measure forbids the surveillance of communications between lawyers and their clients, doctors and their patients, journalists and their sources, and penalizes a law enforcer for unauthorized interception or recordings.

Under the bill, a person under detention shall be allowed to communicate freely with his lawyer at any time and with his family, and to avail of the services of a doctor. There will be an extension of services in the investigation and interrogation of detained suspects.

The US Embassy yesterday welcomed the approval of the bill, saying it was a "step forward" in the global war on terror.

"In general, it's important that law enforcement authorities have the right legal tools to fight terrorism," said embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop who declined to comment on specific provisions.

But Philippine National Police Chief Oscar Calderon said the antiterror bill passed by the Senate would still need "modifications" as it was "lacking in few aspects to become effective."

Still, the Senate approval was a big boost to the campaign against terror, said Calderon, who spoke to reporters while on a visit to the Commission on Human Rights in Muslim Mindanao (CHRMM) in Cotabato.

"I am also glad that there are safeguards in place in the bill to ensure that terror suspects are not abused by arresting officers of the law," he said.

But the flagship Ayusmang Muslimpuan Southern Mindanao nationalist) that the bill, even in the watered-down Senate version, remained vague and broad.

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BusinessWorld

Defense chief says no to ROTC election duties

By Dona Pazzibugan

DEFENSE SECRETARY HERMOGENES EBDANE Jr. yesterday shot down the Commission on Election's plan to mobilize Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) cadets for the May elections.

Ebdane said the plan went against an Oct. 12 memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed between the Comelec and the Department of National Defense that exempted students from poll duties.

Earlier this week, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said the poll body might deploy ROTC cadets in nationwide precincts to make up for an expected shortage of 200,000 election inspectors.

Armed forces of the Philippines records say there are around 130,000 ROTC cadets, or college students who are voluntarily taking up the three-year ROTC course.

"We have a problem with deploying the ROTC," Ebdane told reporters yesterday. "As of now it's covered by the prohibition in the MOA, so as I see it, there seems to be a problem. We may not use the ROTC [cadets]."

He said ROTC cadets could not be deployed without the supervision of active duty military personnel, and the MOA barred soldiers from election duty.

"When you deploy the ROTC, you need some military supervisors and this is prohibited under the MOA," Ebdane said.

Under the MOA initiated by former Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr., the Comelec can no longer tap the military to provide security to its national and Comelec personnel as well as protect polling places and members of the Board of Elections Inspectors.

Troops can also no longer be tapped for counting and canvassing votes, chaperoning polling precincts and transporting ballots and election materials.

Subject to the approval of the AFP Chief of Staff, troops can only escort vehicles transporting election materials when police personnel cannot adequately address a security threat.

McDo wins case on 'golden arches' logo

By Lolo B. Salamero

INTERNATIONAL FAST-FOOD GIANT McDonald's Corp. scored by stamping its 'golden arches' logo all over the Philippines.

The Supreme Court has reversed a Court of Appeals ruling that had allowed MacJoy Fastfood Corp. of Cebu to register "MacJoy & Device" with the Intellectual Property Office (IPO).

The "golden arches" may now be exclusively used by the American company in the Philippines at least.

The high court said the McDonald's and MacJoy trademarks were similar enough to create confusion, pointing out that both offered fast food.

MacJoy sells fried chicken, chicken barbecue, hamburgers, fresh fries, spaghetti, snacks and sandwiches, among other foods, while McDonald's offers several of the same items, some of which have "Mc" or "Mac" attached to their names, like Big Mac, McSpaghetti and McChicken.

"Applying the dominancy test to the instant case, the Court finds herein petitioner's 'McDonald's' and respondent's 'MacJoy' marks confusingly similar with each other such that an ordinary purchaser can conclude an association or relation between the marks," said the high court in its Feb. 2, 2007, decision.

The tribunal said the MacJoy Corporation also sought to ride on the popularity of the McDonald's name, a fast food franchise that originated in the United States.

Implausible and insufficient

It said the Filipino company's explanation for choosing the name MacJoy out of the many others it could have used was "implausible and insufficient."

"The only logical conclusion deducible therefrom is that the respondent would want to ride high on the established reputation and goodwill of the McDonald's marks, which, as applied to petitioner's restaurant business and food products, is undoubtedly beyond question," the high court said.

MacJoy sought to register the "MacJoy & Device" trademark in 1995, with the IPO, but McDonald's opposed this, saying it would make it appear MacJoy's was affiliated with it.

The local company had contended it had been using "MacJoy" for many years and in good faith, and even before McDonald's opened its outlet in Cebu in 1981.

Difference in design

MacJoy also said its trademark could not be confused with McDonald's because of the difference in design and format.

But the IPO agreed with McDonald's.

MacJoy elevated the case to the Court of Appeals, which ruled in its favor and reversed the IPO ruling, saying there were no confusing similarities in the McDonald's and MacJoy trademarks.

In reversing the appellate court's decision and upholding the IPO, the Supreme Court said the dominancy test, instead of the holistic test, should have been used to determine whether or not the two trademarks would be confused with each other.

The dominancy test focuses on the similarities of competing trademarks, while the holistic test considers the entirety of the trademarks.

In this case, the high court said the dominancy test was more suitable.

It said both trademarks used the prefixes "Mc" and "Mac" and the "M" logo that appears in color before each like design.

The court added it was the peril's "Mc" that caught the attention of consumers.

"Well, the word 'MacJoy' attracts attention the same way as 'McDonalds, Jim Pons, McSpaghetti, McDo, Big Mac' and the rest of the McDonald's marks," it said.

The court also said the McDonald's trademark was registered first and the American corporation had established worldwide goodwill.

Globe: No legal basis for 'unlimited text' rollback

GLOBE TELECOM HAS AGAIN REJECTed calls for it to roll back its unlimited texting rates, saying there were "no legal basis" to reverse its pre-Feb. 1 prices.

Responding to an order from the National Telecommunications Commission directing it to stop implementing its new "Unlitxt" promo and told correct back to its previous "Unlimitxt" service, Globe argued that the two promos were interlinked.

In a letter to the NTC yesterday, it said its previous "Unlimitxt" promo was withdrawn from the market last Jan. 19, with the approval of the NTC, and that the new texts that were implemented on Feb. 1 had also been approved by the commission.

It also said the NTC would not suspend the new unlimited promos as it would violate Globe's contracts with those who have subscribed to the new promo.

"In determining whether a promotion of rate for text is a price increase or not, the rates should be compared against the approved rates of P1 per text, and not against the rates of the promotions that immediately preceded it. Otherwise, no access could ever implement a promotion that was different from the rate that came before it, and this would deprive consumers of freedom of choice," Globe said in its letter.

'Price hike'

On Feb. 1, Globe introduced a four-day unlimited text promo costing P60, which cost P20 more than its previous five-day P50 Unlimitxt.

The TEXPower consumer group complained to the NTC, saying the new rates constituted a price hike and that Globe had gone back on its promise that the Unlimitxt rates would be permanent.

The NTC ordered Globe last Feb. 5 to suspend its new promotion and reinstate its previous Unlimitxt service, pending a public hearing.

After running some tests the next day, the NTC found that Globe had still not restored the old Unlimitxt service as ordered.

Globe senior vice president Rodolfo Salalima said on the same day that Globe would not suspend its new unlimited text service because of "legal constraints."

On Feb. 7, the NTC issued an en banc order for Globe to immediately "cease and desist" from selling its new unlimited text promo and "show cause in writing within 15 days" why it should not be sanctioned for refusing to restore the previous unlimited text promo.

The NTC will hear the arguments of Globe and TEXPower at a hearing today. Alan F. Ocbeñadiez

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, February 9, 2007
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 1:1-8
Gospel: Mark 7:14-37

Again Jesus set out, from the country of Tyre, passed through Sidon and, skirting the area of Galilee, he came to the territory of Decapolis. There a deaf man who also had difficulty in speaking was brought to him. They asked Jesus to lay his hand upon him.

Jesus took him apart from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. Then, looking up to heaven, he groaned and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

And his ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak clearly. Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone, but the more he insisted on this, the more they proclaimed it. The people were completely astonished and said, "He has done all things well; he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

Commentary:

We read the story of the serpent that lies to Eve who eats the fruit. Eve and Jonathan the man tries to gratify God and the gaining wisdom. We choose it with Adam and they both see and know. And upon knowing their own sufferings and emotions, they also know what is good and what is evil. They hide themselves from God, knowing they have disobeyed his word.

A deaf man who also has a speech impediment is brought by others to Jesus. He takes the man aside to heal him, putting his fingers into the man's ears and touching his tongue. Jesus spits out and groans, and when the man's ears are opened and his tongue freed, Jesus tells them not to tell anyone. But of course they do. This is a point of a baptismal story and the preparation for it: someone being brought to Jesus, who touches him and speaks on his behalf, consecrating him to the whole and setting him free, giving him back into the care of the community to help him speak and hear the Word. This is what we are to do for others—this is ourselves.

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TOP FORM: Nikki Coseteng emerges from the Comelec in campaign mode after filing her certificate of candidacy for senator. She's running as an independent and hoping for a shot as guest a candidate on the UNO ticket.

IN THE COMPANY OF HIS PEERS, aspiring senator Mayor Jejomar Binay (center) is cheered on by, from left, Senators Pilar Juliana, Franklin Drilon, Rodolfo Biazon and Alfredo Lim. NOEL D. CELIS

SURVEY TOPNOTCHER Loi en Legarda goes through the motions of filing her candidacy even if she says she knows that by doing so it would mean the dismissal of her protest pending at the Supreme Court. ERIK DE CASTRO

JV out of UNO ticket; Sonia Roco in

Front page A1

added not to be seduced by a lack of sufficiency to qualify on this score, and the inclusion of Sonia Roco in the UNO ticket would give the opposition a broader base.

Estrada said the pullout of Ejercito was a painful decision but one that he had to make to ensure the unity of the opposition and to exclude none and leave no bases to rule.

"This is to dismiss the notion that the coming elections are a pansy fight between Lihasnell and Doctrinor – Binayagsil-Arroyo[] – as many of Malacañang's spin doctors would like to portray," Estrada said in statements, the masses—they all do," said the ex-President.

He said it has been his and his father's love to fall flat on his own of the UNO ticket, especially since the latter had suggested at the beginning that he and Ejercito top UNO's line-Jinkee Pablo-Sotto pick.

Estrada said he did not say the May elections are a pansy race but "an opportunity for the people to let their sentiments against the ills in our country."

"Personally, he said, the last fated dismally in the country," he said of his economic misbehaving.

He also said that if it were a battle between himself and the incumbent, he would prefer that the poll is "cong" election.

"I'd like my candidacy against him. I'd stay here [in Tanay]; she can go and campaign. Let's see who will earn," he said.

'Dynasty-ism'

Estrada likewise said that his decision to pull his ticket out of the contested race was not in response to former UNO adviser Francisco Tatad's protest against the "dynasty-ism" exemplified by Ejercito candidacy and those of Tingling Binay, Sen. Aim Peter Cayetano and the latter's sister Pia Cayetano and sister-in-law, Rep. Lani Cayetano, and the latter's half-brother.

"Tatad's on law against public official dynasties," Estrada declared.

He said the decision to field Ejercito numbers officials running for office should be limited to the highest office of the land. He said he had numerous influence and resources as he continued to have members of the family win elections.

"Already [Mr.Arroyo] has only many. One of her sons is a congressman (Mocoppaga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo). He's not [who is] is running for a seat in Ilocos. His brother-in-law (Negros Occ. Rep. Ignacio Arroyo) is also a congressman. They already have a dynasty," Estrada said, adding:

"In my case, it would have been

ESTRADA: 'It was a hard decision, hard to convince [Ejercito] to do it as we'd wish.'

just two of my sons to be honest. If [Ejercito did not withdraw.]"

Reluctantly

However, he said, pulling his son out of the contested race did not mean that dine Peter Cayetano and his ex-Primitivo—both in the UNO ticket—are not in the picture.

"The political dynasty issue is a false issue," he said.

Four opposition political blocs led by former Sen. Loren Legarda and Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III yesterday filed their candidacies for senator at the Commission on Elections.

Aquino, only son of former President Corazon Aquino, said the May elections would be a referendum on the Arroyo administration, and appealed to voters to make the right decisions.

She sat going for a stronger and stronger moral government that is nonetheless not does not ensure democratic space, or do we go after and labor into democracy?" he said.

Aquino called on voters to help him fight the country's purported slide into a dictatorship, saying "what we're looking now is democracy for our lives, the decisions of only one person and one group, and the imminent attack on our democratic institutions."

He said only the Senate and the Supreme Court had remained as the last bastion of democracy in the Philippine democracy. He said our running under the administration party and said the country had forced better. Going to the Senate administration, when there was "more democracy in space."

Trademark yellow

Aquino, who was celebrating his 47th birthday, was accompanied by his mother, his sister Pinky, and their husband, Senator Sipit—all wearing yellow, the latter.

The former President said the was pushing for her son and the coming elections.

She compared her son to his father, the murdered former Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., saying both loved their country, were driven by their convictions, and faced nations of internal political turmoil.

With the Aquino entourage were Senator Franklin Drilon, Rodolfo Biazon and Alfredo Lim, as well as Cebu Governor, a former colleagues in the senate, and Senator Quintero Drilon, Mr. Senator's trust adviser on the peace process.

Dismissal of protest

Legarda, who is running under the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC), said she had accepted the fact that her filing of her candidacy would mean the dismissal of her protest contesting the result of the 2004 vice presidential election pending at the Supreme Court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET).

Some 37.5 millions said there must not have not been defeated her government, and I don't think we can fault it after 20.9 because of my opponent's debating stance," she told reporters in reference to Vice President Noli de Castro.

Legarda said, however, that her lawyers were able to uncover purported by their election protest, just recently in Luzon del Sur.

"In a way, true is our legacy to the Filipino people who do not have seen the truth that this [choosing] was part of the bigger picture [to] protecting democracy," she said. "It's not a matter of giving up. It's a matter of being realistic."

Dr. Cano told the hopeful that Legarda's "abandonment" offers election protest had dispelled him of the shame to show his name from her official that he had shamed the way to the second top post in the land.

"I now have a problem because here now I prove that I did not shame?" he told. "She knows that I did not shame. She should contain her protest."

It was to have been Dr. Cano's case in protest evidence contains the presentation of shooting and fraud by Legarda's lawyers in the PET.

Nothing to hide

Asked if her political image was being affected by the murder case involving her estranged husband, Senator Rodolfo Jr., Antonio Leviste, Legarda said: "My personal life has been in open book and I have nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of. Everyone circles a seven and despite my unpretty life, I offer my services to the Filipino people." Necessary on Page A2.)

Legarda, who is running under the KBC's "opposition strong," was accompanied to the Comelec by her lawyer Dido Belluntio, movie producers Lily Monteverde and Bernardo Bernardo and ex-diplomat Lorenzo Shubert.

Actor Dominique "Bibil" Cooseteng and John Daniella, both bonsai musician, also filed their certificate of candidacy.

Detailed to running under UNO, Cooseteng said she was to run independent although she hoped to be engaged as UNO guest candidate.

Daniella was the last to file his certificate of candidacy yesterday, bringing to 37 the number of persons seen running for senator.

Salvador, dp-Pilipino and Partido ng Manggagawa—party list groups seeking seats in the House of Representatives—also filed their nominations to participate in the May elections. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

It's Friday, Wednesday Group still out

Front page A1

They were to have met Wednesday night but the meeting fell through because deliberations on top legislative issues ran late into the wee hours of Thursday morning.

Today's the day

Villar, Enrile and Pangilinan said they would come to a decision last night and make their announcement today.

Sr. Enrile disclosed on Wednesday that Arroyo and Arroyo were among the administration's nine senatorial aspirants. Both can and were under the administration conditioned to the 2001 senatorial election.

Villar had earlier declared he would run under the United Opposition (UNO) on a third force. Arroyo and Pangilinan, on the other hand, indicated that they might run as independent candidates.

A source said Enrile would also choose to join the administration's Team Unity.

Translation, Villar again raised the possibility that he and his colleagues might take different paths during the May 14 elections.

"It's possible that we'll go our separate ways. It's possible that we'll run as a group. But we'll remain friends," he told reporters.

Talks in the lobby between UNO and the Wednesday Group emerged last weekend when Pangilinan disclosed that UNO leaders had issued an ultimatum to the group to make its decision.

UNO leaders named eight of the opposition's 12 candidates last week, but were quick to say that the four remaining slots were reserved for the Wednesday Group.

Complete ticket

On the other side of the fence, Senator and her Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. said the ruling coalition would formally announce on Saturday its Team Unity ticket for the senatorial race.

The administration stalwart said the lineup that is complete 12-member ticket would be announced, in other sparkling speculation that with the Wednesday Group still holding out, Malacañang would be hard put to fill up the slots.

"We will have a respectable slate—a complete one to counter the much-hyped candidates of the opposition," declared Pichay, who is preparing to announce his senatorial candidacy today in Quezon City.

Pichay did not divulge the names of the candidates who would make it to the Team Unity ticket, but said "there should be one from the Muslim community."

He also said UNO should not be overconfident even after the latest survey showed that the majority of its candidates led by Former Sen. Loren Legarda would win if the elections were held today.

I must down

Rep. Antonio Cuenco of Cebu City and Rep. Edwin Ur of Antarka, both administration congressmen, refused Pichay saying UNO should not presume it would win the elections despite the survey results. They said the administration machinery was in place to ensure the victory of its own candidates.

But even before Malacañang could complete its slate, one administration stalwart, Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, has bowed out.

In a statement issued yesterday, Teodoro, a nephew of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, said the time was not ripe for him to seek a Senate seat although he had been assured of support in the ticket's coalition.

"After much thought, prayer and reflection, I have decided not to run for the Senate. There is still, at this decision amid the numerous expressions of support I received," he said.

Teodoro said that being in the Senate, "considering the difficult times and, response of various groups, my services may resolve to push for genuine constitutional reform."

He said he would do better in another capacity, particularly in his advocacy for the child's special concerns and welfare, and Teodoro mentioned his chairmanship of the Senate committee on youth and sports development.

He hopes to succeed of a slot in the Team Unity slate, and his party mates and politician wife, Tarlac del Norte Rep. Robert Aur Ilarde, is not left behind.

With Teodoro out, Barbers is being considered for inclusion by Tarlac officials and members from the Malacañang.

Barbers Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, who filed his own certificate of candidacy after being excluded by both the senatorial candidate from the Senate, confirmed that Barbers were being considered by the ruling coalition.

Barbers had said in an earlier interview that he was considering seeking the Senate seat formerly occupied by his father, the late Sen. Robert Barbers.

Congressman tops Senate mock polls; Villar No. 7

By TJ Burgonio

IN HIS OWN TURF, ERAP

President Joseph Estrada is one of the topvoiced for senator.

A "mock election" conducted on Wednesday by Senate employees and legislative staff, had Villar landing seventh among 20 senatorial aspirants, behind two running lawmakers from the House of Representatives and some of his colleagues.

Villar, who leads the pack of senators seeking reelection, obtained 336 votes in the mock poll that was initiated by the Senate employees group Senad to find their favored senatorial "bets" to win—mostly half of the 1,000 voting population in the chambers.

"I guess it's because only half of the voting population turned out," Senate president Pro Hilario Davide in explaining Villar's considerably low ranking.

"But aside na nga[lan, on less hits," said Biazon, the legislative's legislative officer of the Senate debate section.

Some 736 employees and staff members trooped to the Padilla Room on Wednesday morning to vote. The list of 20 senatorial aspirants was chosen up by Senad-formed cross-section participants.

The votes were counted on the same day, but the results were released to the media only yesterday.

The four topmost, which consolidated only half of the 1,000 voters, was interested to the short notice and the busy schedule set for the ballot, which ruined the passage of a number of bills in the runup to its adjournment this week.

Santiago Rep. Francis Escudero topped the poll with 336 votes, followed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson with 424, and Taguig Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano with 374.

Trailing them were Senators Rolph Recto (355), Jinkee Arroyo (348) and Majority Leader Pres. Pro Juan Ponce Enrile (345).

Asked to explain the majority-set appearance high some of coolly down in Escudero and Magdiwan, Mayor said: "I think they have charisma and are prime-

Rounding out the "winning 12" were Senators Ralph Recto (355), Jinkee Arroyo (348), Juan Ponce Enrile (345), Loren Legarda (337), Aquilino Pimentel III (298), Former Sen. Loren Legarda (297) and Taclan Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III (261).

Also in the race former Sen. Vicente Sotto, Associate Tillman, former Senators Juan Ponce and Blas Ople, Cooseteng, Rolando Teresa Jr., President Macapagal-Arroyo's third of Staff Michael Robinos, Rep. Miguel Zubiri, former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta, Sec. Jose Miguel Ejercito, Sen. Loren Ejercito, Rep. Prospero Pichay, and Bicol Vice Gov. Lou "Chavit" Singson.

Those at the bottom of the heap were actor Richard Gomez (21) and actor Sen. Sharon, who garnered one vote along with Santo Rosa and former Sen. Francisco Tatad.

"The reasons we're intelligent," Biazon said, when asked to comment on the low votes for the actors.

SC tells Bro. Mike to pay bank P2.5M

By Lolita D. Salamovia

THE SUPREME COURT HAS ORDERED EL Shaddai leader Mariano "Mike" Velarde to pay the P1-million loan he obtained from a savings bank in 1982, plus more than P1.5 million in interest the loan had accumulated.

The tribunal, in a Feb. 5 resolution, partly granted Velarde's appeal of the court's 2004 decision on the same case. The court had ordered Velarde to pay more than P15 million to the Pryce Savings and Loan Bank.

The high court maintained that Velarde would still have to pay the loan he obtained from the bank, but reduced the amount that he would have to give.

It said the initially prescribed interest rate of 23 percent, plus the 24-percent penalty charge per annum until the amount was paid, and the 25 percent attorney's fees the bank had demanded were too much.

"Equity dictates that we review the amount of the award, considering the excessive interest rate and the too onerous penalty and, consequently, the resulting excessive attorney's fees," the SC said.

It thus ruled that Velarde should just pay the principal amount of P1 million, more than P1.5 million in interest, 12 percent legal interest per year until the amount was paid, and P50,000 in attorney's fees.

The high court said it would be inequitable to penalize Velarde with huge interest payments considering the final resolution of his case had dragged on for several years because Westamerica Savings and Loan Bank had incorporated appeals, which resulted in the escalation of Velarde's obligation to more than 10 times the principal amount.

The high court also said Velarde could not be faulted for not settling the loan earlier because both the Court of Appeals and the Manila Regional Trial Court ruled that the Pryce Savings and Loan Bank failed to prove the existence of the loan.

But while it reduced the amount of Velarde's obligation, the high court denied Velarde's plea to stop him from paying the loan, saying he had raised no substantial arguments.

J. de los Reyes; 91

AGENCY "PAGBIBO" DE LOS REYES, JR. (1915-Filipino), died on Tuesday at the age of 91.

His body rests first at the Private Chapel of the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels on Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

He is survived by his wife Felicing, children Anneling and Mila, Father Jess, Jeanie and Cheeling, Ming and Ludling, Father Joel, Jimmy and Neneng, Steve and Minerva and grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Burial will be on Sunday at Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque after a Mass at 1 p.m.

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Prosecution, defense panels gird for battle

NOW THAT FORMER BATANGAS Gov. Antonio "Tony" Leviste is in jail, prosecutors yesterday moved to upgrade the criminal case against Leviste from homicide to murder, while the prosecution would study the case well before proceeding to trial.

"We will go over the records a hundred times, as we did in other cases we handled. There is strong evidence for murder against Leviste," he said.

Steve Quimsing adds:

Leviste stays in jail at his petition for a TRO to stop the Department of Justice from continuing to hear his case has been denied by the Court of Appeals.

Salceda appointed Palace chief of staff

From page A1

He will replace Michael Defensor who is expected to hand in his resignation today to run for senator in the May elections.

"I am just going back to my first love of complete staff work. Since my contract finishes in June, just like any ordinary job under Upaid for work today," said Salceda, the congressman from Albay who has been term-limited this year and will not be eligible to run again.

Salceda, who is an economic adviser to Mr Arroyo, met yesterday with the President who asked him to write his job description on top of the regular duties of chief of staff.

Salceda said his main point is that of staff work to work for the confirmation of agencies reform bills, universal access to secondary education especially through pro-poor and system financing, enhancement of comprehensive and compulsory health insurance, protection of overseas Filipino workers, especially in the power sector, promotion of the super region investment and financing strategy, and rehabilitation of his distress calculus province.

Although Salceda is expected to start on his new job by Monday, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the President had allowed him some time to deal with unfinished business as chair of the House appropriations committee, which takes charge of the yearly budget process.

Salceda, a member of the President's Kampi Party, was the President's student at the Ateneo de Manila University where Mr Arroyo was an economics professor. One other Cabinet member, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, was also an Ateneo student of Mr Arroyo.

Hotshot market analyst

Before becoming a legislator, Salceda was a hotshot stock market analyst, voted by foreign fund managers in Asiamoney's annual survey as Asia's "Best Analyst" in 1999 and "Best Economist" for four consecutive years from 1993 to 1996. He was research director for the Philippine units of the JMC Savings and ING Barings securities firms.

Salceda, who finished management engineering, cum laude, from the Ateneo de Manila University, and took his master's in business management, with distinction, from the Asian Institute of Management, also served as a research intern with the late Speaker Ramon Mitra and chief of staff to the congressional office of the late Raul Roco.

First day in the life of prisoner No. 517

From page A1

without his family watching," Teves said.

On the verge of tears, the latter said in a trembling voice: "My Dad is a very strong man. He's a fighter. He can handle conditions there. It would break his heart (if we) see him. But all I want to know is that he is OK, though I am hurting his request."

Leviste was jailed on Wednesday night on orders of Makati Judge Rina Alameda, who approved earlier in the day the Justice department's recommendation to upgrade to murder from homicide the charge filed against him for the late Mar dumb on Jan. 13.

Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco had moved for the upgrading of the charge based on results of a reinvestigation, done upon the request of the victim's family.

Treachery

The prosecutor had said in his resolution that enough for upgrade that elements of murder—treachery, cruelty and premeditation—were established during the reinvestigation.

Leviste's lawyers had warned up to the shooting hours after the killing but claimed self-defense.

His eyewitnesses, however, could corroborate the prosecution's and defense's versions of the killing, which took place between noon and 1 p.m. inside Leviste's office on the 9th floor of his GPL Building in Makati City.

Pursuing the upgrade, the court issued an arrest warrant against Leviste and canceled the bail of P440,000 he had posted while facing trial for the lesser offense of homicide.

Doing fine

Supt. Dario Ortaliz, MC, warden, told the inmate that the arrest would not be in the 1,500-sq. m. jail compound was doing fine.

"He did not ask for anything. I was the one who asked him to cooperate and abide by all the rules here," Ortaliz said when reached by phone.

While Leviste's daughter was not aware of any visits to his father on Wednesday night, Ortaliz said a visitor came for the detainee and brought clothes, a mattress, beddings and a blanket.

Supply of food

The visitor also brought the businessman his supply of food that complied with "a diet regimen," the warden said.

"We could give him rations but he has his own diet regimen. He is feeling OK. In fact so good. No problem," Ortaliz said.

He also had his maintenance medicine for hypertension, a condition which kept him at the hospital following his surrender for the shooting on Jan. 12.

Leviste himself had spoken about his condition, however, to rest in the family during a press conference at the Makati police station after his arrest on Wednesday.

"Well, I'm 67. I'm suffering from hypertension. My blood pressure is stable only because my physician has prescribed the dosage of medications. If I do not take my medication, I can have a stroke any time. And it incidentally runs in the family. Several had fatal strokes," he said.

A DAUGHTER'S LAMENT: Vanessa Leviste, daughter of former Batangas Governor Antonio Leviste, pours out her heart during a press conference at the family-owned GPL building in Makati City.

Fresh air

Doctors from Ospital ng Makati examined Leviste before he was brought to his cell. While they found his blood pressure "within normal range," they recommended that he undergo an electrocardiogram. The test can detect irregularities in heartbeat.

But like any other detainee, Leviste may get some fresh air every day as he would be allowed to go out of his cell after entering hours as he could walk around the compound.

Visiting hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Inside his cell, Leviste may get some entertainment from a television set and radios. But player and under regulation in all of BJC's 20 cells for safe reasons.

His daughter said the family did not want preferential treatment for Leviste.

Condemned

Still decrying her father's indictment for murder and subsequent detention, only one question was on Leviste's mind.

"Why? What is their reason for doing all of these? Why is my father being used as a scapegoat? He is 67. He is a sick man, and they have condemned him to a life in hell for the last years of his life," said Leviste, who went to prison to see her father's bail at the GPL Building.

She said her father had been cooperating since the start and had never shown any intention to run away.

"It's very hard to discount doubts that maybe, there are hidden forces behind all of these. That is unfair on (the) families (Leviste's and the victim's). All we ask is that justice is served to both parties," she said.

No TRO

The Court of Appeals has directed Leviste in file a comment within five days on his murder charge and arrest in connection with his petition seeking to stop the case's reinvestigation.

The appeals court, in a resolution released yesterday, did not issue a restraining order on his reinvestigation.

It noted that Leviste's arrest for murder could render his petition moot.

In his petition to the Court of Appeals, which was filed before the submission of his case was concluded, Leviste asked the appellate court to stop the Department of Justice from continuing with the reinvestigation.

The ex-governor also asked the court to stop Judge Alameda from acting on the DOJ recommendations.

Leviste had contended that the DOJ, specifically Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, had prejudged the case and were expected to upgrade his homicide charge to murder.

De las Alas' heirs had sought the reinvestigation of the case after Leviste was initially charged with homicide.

The reinvestigation lasted nine days, after which the DOJ recommended that Leviste and John and Jane Does be charged with murder for De las Alas' death.

Alameda has admitted the DOJ's recommendation and subsequently ordered Leviste's arrest with no bail.

SLEX Rehabilitation and Upgrading Project

Traffic Advisory :
NEW ROAD INTO FILINVEST OPENS

South Luzon Tollway Corporation (SLTC) has opened the South Station Exit (also known as Ilaya Road) to motorists going into Filinvest and/or proceeding to Las Piñas, or Molino, in Cavite.

The South Station Exit is the alternate route for motorists using the Alabang Viaduct Bridge to enter Filinvest through the Filinvest Exit.

The 3 toll gates leading into Filinvest will be closed to vehicles coming from the Alabang Viaduct bridge starting February 22, 2007.

All other toll gates in the East will stay open. Motorists proceeding to Laguna or back to Manila will be accommodated.

Southbound motorists can still use the Alabang Exit and the Viaduct bridge. 4 lanes will be kept open on the bridge at all times.

South Station Exit is a component of the SLEX Rehabilitation and Upgrading project.

Please observe traffic signs and advisories in the area for your safety and convenience. For more information, please call 02-791-8575.

SOUTH LUZON TOLLWAY CORPORATION

PNP: Slay plot on Erap behind new restrictions

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG HAS RETRIEVED warnings of a plot by communist rebels to assassinate high-profile administration and opposition personalities, including jailed President Joseph Estrada and his sons.

National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales told Palace reporters police intelligence had uncovered a fresh plan by the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) to destabilize the Arroyo administration by deploying hit men before the May elections.

"We picked up very serious information of an assassination attempt on important figures, including in the Estrada camp," Gonzales said.

Since 2001, when President Macapagal-Arroyo came to power, security officials had warned of assassination attempts, specifically against Estrada, in order to disrupt her administration.

Gonzales said the intelligence reports showed that Estrada and his sons—Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito—were on top of the CPP-NPA hit list.

He said some administration officials were also on the list but he assured only himself and the President.

Gonzales said the troops had left the matter of tightening security around the targeted officials to the police.

"It's up to them (security officials) how to address this," Gonzales said.

The Philippine National Police responded by tightening security at Estrada's detention center in Tanay, Rizal.

Chief Supt. Nestor Hilomen, chief of the Police Security and Protection Office (PSPO), said non-family members, except for his lawyers, may not visit Estrada.

"To make it safe for him, we will not allow any visitors who are not family members (or his lawyers) to enter while we still validate the threats," Hilomen said.

He denied that Estrada, the acknowledged head of the political opposition, was being isolated from his allies.

"We don't discriminate whether (someone) is with the opposition or administration. What's important is his (Estrada's) safety," Hilomen said.

Estrada, however, will ask the Commission on Human Rights to look into the restrictions against him.

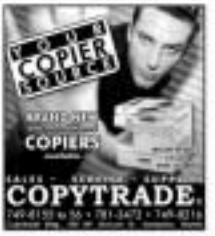
Lawyer Rufus Rodriguez, the ex-President's spokesperson, said Estrada's use of his mobile phone had also been restricted.

"The PNP has no right to deny him these basic rights and to prevent his communication with the outside world. This is an illegal act and must be corrected accordingly," Rodriguez said.

He said Estrada's lawyers will also file an urgent motion before the Sandiganbayan "to have his rights restored, including his access to communication equipment."

"This is clearly a desperate move on the part of the administration to prevent President Estrada from participating in any discussion during election on campaign strategies which will ensure the landslide win of the opposition's senatorial candidates," Rodriguez said. With Alexis Romero and Norman Bordadora

ESTRADA



3 Filipino students win ADB int'l essay contest

By Dirk C. Dorido

THREE FILIPINO STUDENTS WON IN an international essay competition held by the Asian Development Bank to deepen awareness on sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

Gail Bruce Estrellon, 28, from the Tokyo Institute of Technology; Ricksterrose Guzman, 26, from the Ateneo de Manila University and Chaydel Magbuo, 28, from the Ifu Ia Safu University, were among the 26 student representatives who singled out from over 600 participants from 16 countries.

The three Filipino students will join seven winners in a week-long program culminating in the "Youth Forum on Sustainable Development" in Kyoto, Japan on March 17. The forum will provide winning essayists with the opportunity to discuss issues regarding sustainable development.

The competition was co-sponsored by Board, a network of Japanese university students concerned with development issues.

'Voice of the Youth'

The event will conclude with the adoption of "the Voice of the Youth," a statement written by the students on sustainable development.

In addition, the winning essays would be assembled and published in a book, the ADB announced yesterday.

The competition, opened to university students aged 18 years to 29 years from Asia and the Pacific, is part of a series of ed national events that will preceds the ADB's 40th Annual Meeting to be held in Kyoto on May 4-7.

"The competition has provided the opportunity for hundreds of university students to contribute their views on major public policy issues challenging Asia and the Pacific," said Basilio Lobusi, director general of ADB's regional and sustainable development department.

"The upcoming Youth Forum in Kyoto will provide an exciting opportunity for the winning essayists to deliberate development priorities and ways in which the region's environmental, economic, and social challenges can be effectively addressed with the active involvement of young people."

The essays, written from a country or regional perspective, addressed one of three specific topics: economic growth and environmental conservation; human resource development and institutions; and industry and infrastructure.

International panel of judges

Winners were judged on the basis of originality and creativity of thought, structure and coherence of arguments, awareness of sustainable development within the context of the essayist's environment and realities and relevance to the competition's themes.

A three-member independent jury reviewed each of the more than 600 essays submitted to the student essay competition, each essay in the independent work of the readers and reflects personal views.

Jury members included Ashok Khosla, chair of Development Alternatives from New Delhi, India and Brian Wheeler, United Nations Special Ambassador for Millennium Development Goals to Asia and the Pacific from Jakarta, Indonesia. Tetsunari Yedaka, professor of project planning and management at the University of Tokyo, chaired the jury.

'PERMIT TO CAMPAIGN'
Military knows who's paying NPA

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon and Alcuin Papa

LUCENA CITY—THE MILITARY HAS REserved a seat to find out who among election candidates has paid the so-called "permit to campaign" (PTC) fee to the communist New People's Army rebels.

If a candidate's campaign posters and streamers remain undamaged, especially if pasted in remote areas believed to be controlled by the communist guerrillas, then more probably the politician has paid his PTC fee.

"That's what we recently learned from Quezon politicians," Col. Rhoderick Parayno, spokesman of the military's Southern Luzon Command, told the Inquirer.

Quezon Board Member Adelio Pinzunda told Parayno on Monday that 80% rebel collection of campaign contributions and assessments of politicians who refuse to submit to the financial imposition of the revolutionary movement.

"But since the politician has settled his PTC fee, the 80% rebels protect the campaign materials of the candidates. I was even told that the communist guerrillas sometimes campaign for the politician since the PTC fee is paid," Pinzunda said.

The communist rebel movement, through the NPA, traditionally enforces PTC fees during elections. Candidates who refuse or fail to make the payment in cash or in kind face harassment or attacks from the rebel group.

For most politicians in Quezon province, paying the PTC fee was part and parcel of the election campaign.

"There's nothing we can do. We want a battle-free election campaign," said one candidate who requested anonymity.

The same candidate admitted that aside from cash payment, he was asked to "donate" a laptop computer and several boxes of canned goods.

In Manila, Philippine National Police Chief Dir. Gen. Oscar Calderon told reporters yesterday that the NPA was now extending "tax exemption letters" to politicians for the coming elections.

Calderon said this was the first time the NPA had tried to extort money from candidates through the Internet.

The PNP chief urged politicians and victims of extortion by the NPA to "report the matter to police" so they could take the appropriate action and arrest the extortionists.

"The statements they will give us can be the basis in file a case. We can entrap them (extortionists) and arrest them while in possession of the money," Calderon said.

He said the NPA usually asked a P50,000 PTC fee from candidates running for senator. From previous reports, the PTC fees for regional and local officials could go up to P100,000, depending on the area.

Malik: General, Sulu execs raise

From page A1

Dobokolen had earlier expressed a desire for his group was burned to extinction in Patikul, but on Sunday he finally admitted during his confirmation hearings at the Commission on Appointments that he and his men had been given hostage by their MNLF leader.

Malik's testimony was that $900,000 in ransom was paid to the MILF.

But Malik maintained that the P500,000 he received was "goodwill money" for the families of nine MILF members who were killed in a "misencounter" with Philippine Marines in Tongkil, Patikul, on July 26 and on Jan. 31.

Malik says only the families in a town of Pegalan each commander, consisting of a 20- to-man complex occupied by the MILF in Barangay Bitan-ag Proper.

MILF regulars stalled around listening to the hostage interviews. Also in the camp was MILF chief of staff Ameddin Muslim, a nephew of MILF chief Hon Murad's Moslem to under house arrest in Manila while being tried for a rebellion on Jolo that left over 200 people dead.

On Jan. 23, Dobokolen, Jumsi and several others came to look into the two successive encounters between the Marines and a group of armed men. Malik said the Marines "misencounter" were MILF members who were aboard a Ford pickup.

Legitimate encounter

Hon Sen Wig. Sen. Jamo Sa Sinhan said his men were pursuing an Abu Sayyaf group that had abused a pickup after killing three marines in an ambush.

Malik then maintained it was a "legitimate encounter" with the Abu Sayyaf saying that Feisal was an Abu Sayyaf secretary, not MNLF.

Malik said then Dobokolen and Jumsi never pursued any on "unreliable intelligence" which included the possession of "goodwill money" to the families of the slain MNLF members.

"That was the main objective of their coming here last Friday. We were talking about goodwill money," Malik said, speaking alternately in Filipino and English.

"It would have been blood money if the killing was unwarranted, but since it was a misencounter, it was goodwill money," he said.

During the discussion, Malik said the topic shifted to finding ways to put an end to the series of misencounters.

Malik maintained there was no hostage taking, and slammed Dobokolen for saying he was taken hostage by the MNLF for 96 hours. Dobokolen and 32 others were released Sunday afternoon at the public school grounds here.

'Impure motives'

"If he does not deny what he said and adds to his earlier pronouncements that there was no hostage-taking, it means that was coming here with impure motives," Malik said.

According to Malik, Dobokolen and Jumsi had been going to the MILF camp for some time.

"If the talk is just about misencounters, there's no end there. So we wanted to solve it on a higher level, a separate meeting scheduled on Feb. 4

UP UP AND AWAY: Hors d'oeuvres [illegible] over the [illegible] during [illegible] in the five-day Philippine International Hot Air Balloon Festival that started on Thursday in Clark Field in Angeles City, Pampanga. [illegible]

IN THE HEART OF MILF STRONGHOLD: Members of the MILF Bangsamoro Armed Forces [illegible] Ustadz Abubakar Maliik pose for the [illegible] at their 25-ha headquarters in Barangay Bitan-ag in Pikit

First female hostage in Nigeria is Filipina

From page A1

a sharp increase in hostage-taking in the Delta. The attacks are carried out by a mixture of separatist groups and ex-militants, cleaved criminal gangs, lured by the attractive cash-for-release money.

The separatists want a bigger share of the oil revenues—Nigeria is the world's sixth largest exporter—for the local population, much of which lives in grinding poverty.

Nigerian gunmen did release a man and an Italian hostage on Wednesday, but grab new or free kidnappings ended up on the same day there was no sign of any let up in the violent attacks against oil interests and separatists promised to keep linked to the oil industry.

Ban on Filipino workers

Their kidnapping prompted President Arroyo and Foreign Affairs to ban a temporary ban on Filipinos going to work in Nigeria, where nearly 4,000 Filipinos are already employed.

"Our embassy is working closely with the Nigerian authorities to try and free the Filipinos now being held captive," said Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Ed Malaya.

Malaya said the government had not had "direct contact" with the 24 seamen but added that Nigerian authorities had.

"They are said to be in good health," Malaya said, he said the seamen were believed to be held by their abductors in a swamp area in the delta region. "That's as far as we know," he said.

CNN footage of Filipinos

A 32-ft video yesterday showed what the network said were the 24 hostages, who looked frightened and disheveled in masked militants. Also off-rounds of machine gun fire accompanied the footage.

"The hostages, held in captivity since their cargo ship was seized Jan. 26, sit on white plastic chairs, lined up in a circle, and [illegible] if they would live or die." CNN said on its website.

A MILITANT group has released [illegible] in the Delta region of Nigeria, Africa's top oil producer. This photo is from [illegible] Niger Delta.

Now in its 20th year
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Now in its 17th year
THE GOV. DEMETRIO QUIRINO SR. SCHOLARSHIP GRANTS

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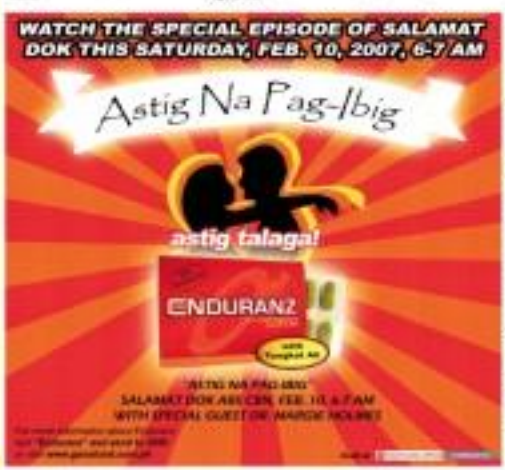


d money

...dhud Task Force together with MNLF commander
...n, Sulu

...When we asked Undersecretary Santos if it would push through, he replied there was a 95-percent possibility it would. 'Why not hold it now, here,' I said," Malik recalled.

Not joking

Malik said he even told Dolorfino and Santos to "hold the talks at the Pagoda.

"They thought I was joking," Malik said.

After the discussions, Dolorfino's group stood up saying they were leaving, Malik said.

"I said, no, no, stay overnight kayo dito," he said.

...places where foreigners work and live in the Niger ...shows the militants patrolling the creeks of the

...Some militants pointed weapons at them; others ...readily brandished rocket-propelled grenades," it said.

...he network quoted Elmer Nacionales, the cargo ...s chief officers as saying: "I have a family and no ...d to communicate with them."

...bishops said he had seen the broadcast but could not ...ment.

...rchman of Total

...he Frenchman, identified as Daniel Caporal, married ...Nigerian woman and under local contract to French group Total, was picked up by armed men as he ...ved home around 9 p.m. Wednesday, the sources ...

...He was driving home in his own when he was ac...ed," one industry source said on condition of ...nymity.

...Caporal, in his 50s, is the founder of a small logis... company whose name was not given. Prior to set... up his own company, he worked for Nerco Distri...on, the Nigerian arm of the Houston-based oil ser...e company Halliburton, according to industry ...rces.

...his was the first time a Frenchman working on a ...l contract for Total had been seized in the Niger ...ta region of southern Nigeria. Industry sources ...d Total had so far been one of the oil companies ...t spared.

...er nationals captive

...In addition to the 26 Filipinos and the newly kid...ped Frenchman, two Indians, two Americans and a ...Mexican national are still being held by different armed ...ups.

...Nine Chinese oil workers from the China National ...shore Corp. (CNPC) kidnapped Jan. 25 were freed ...esday.

...Nigeria, which derives more than 95 percent of its for... exchange earnings from oil, lost more than half a ...llion barrels a day last year to unrest in the Delta. AFP

Dureza says Moro rebel leader agreed to give gov't workers access to remote villages in Jolo

JESUS DUREZA, PRESIDENTIAL adviser on the peace process, said yesterday he had secured the commitment of Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader Malimo Malik to give access to government workers to develop remote villages on Jolo island.

"We cleared it out and we agreed to construct our work for peace and development because Jolo needs special intervention," Dureza told Agence France Presse, referring to joint work by the MNLF and the government.

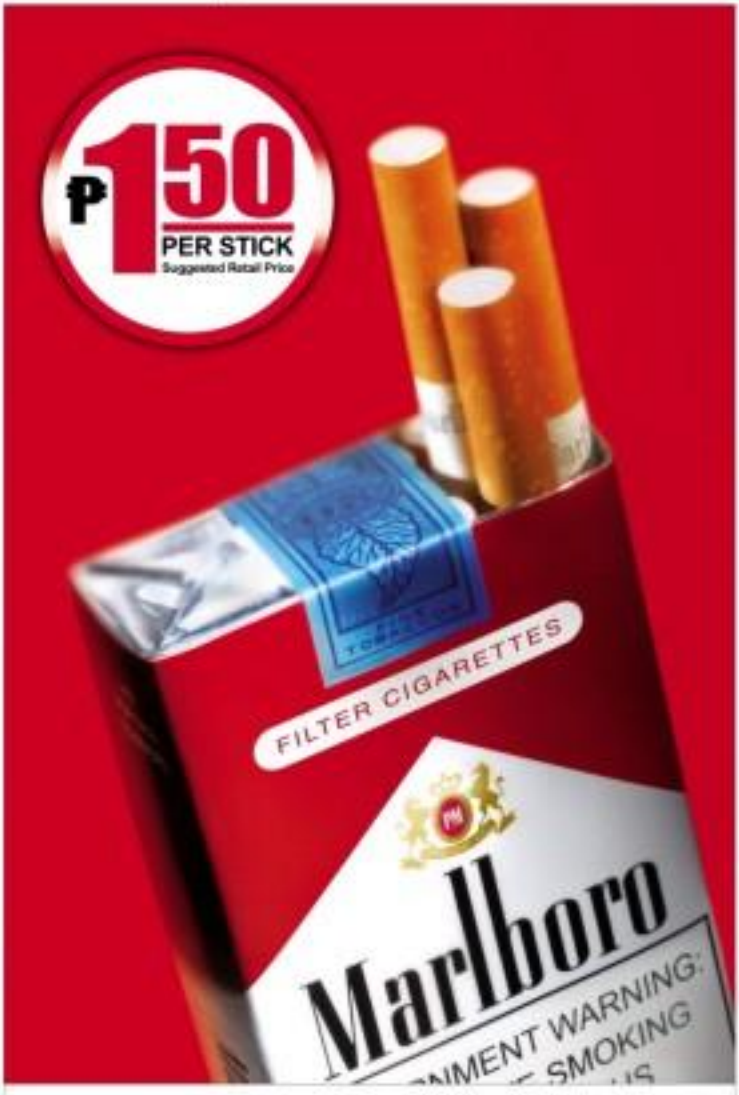
Dureza said he was in Mindanao to "pursue sovereignty work" on development aid, and would meet with his MNLF counterpart yesterday.

Malik's men held Dureza's deputy Ramon Santos, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino and 19 security aides hostage for two days when they went to Jolo to speak with MNLF leaders last week.

The MNLF was formerly a separatist group that signed a peace treaty with Manila in 1996, settling for limited autonomy.

Hundreds of MNLF fighters were integrated into the Philippine military and police forces under the deal, but the government failed to disarm thousands of others.

Malik seized Dolorfino's group and demanded a fresh meeting with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the influential organization of Muslim countries which brokered the peace pact. AFP



PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Hidden agendas

EDITORIAL

SENATORIAL ELECTIONS, TO BE SURE, HAVE ALways been a referendum on the sitting administration. This means they are about more than who happens to be president, they are also about the policies the administration stands for as a whole. Those opposed to an administration may be fixated on the incumbent and may be capitalizing on negative public opinion about a president. But any opposition is duty-bound to present its alternative set of policies as well. What the public is entitled to, on the most basic of levels, is for both sides to be up-front about what their human slates represent.

Right now as both sides (and in a midterm election such as this one, there can only ever be two sides) pick their senatorial teams, the paramount consideration is "winnability." Once the candidates start campaigning, however, the public deserves to know the answers to several questions.

For the administration, what is its "Team Unity" united behind? President Macapagal-Arroyo's policies? Or only some, but not all, of them? If so, which? Only her MR lieutenants, but not her remoter ex-human rights? Or do they intend to campaign for a vindication of the President as a leader?

Then again, why does the President seem to need them more than they need her? This is a President who doesn't dare raise anyone's hands except in carefully controlled circumstances—that is, before captive audiences of brown supporters. This is a standard contrast with all previous administrations and the President's old practice of campaigning for her senatorial victories in 2001 and 2004. If she's so strong, why is she acting so weak?

The administration Senate slate is a coalition. What is the election about as these coalesced parties?

The President's pet party, Kampi, has been gobbling up members of the leftover dominant administration party, Lakas-CMD. She has shrugged off Lakas' demands for party loyalty. What's in it for Kampi, and what price will Lakas have to pay for standing by as its stalks are raided? Newspaper reports say accommodations are being made for Lakas members in the Cabinet and the bureaucracy. On the eve of elections, and afterward for defeated candidates?

What is the price of Eduardo Mr. Cojuangco's Nacionalista People's Coalition alliance with the administration? Four of its six candidates are affiliated with the Palace, which holds the Presidential Commission on Good Governance over Cojuangco and his disputed financial interests in the country's largest conglomerate, San Miguel Corp. Will they wear as a slice in the President's, or Cojuangco's, interests, or do both now happily coexist side by side. The only way they can, considering the President's duty to defend the national interest, is if the set that aside and reached a deal with Cojuangco. And what deals are those?

And where do all the coalition partners stand on the question of Executive-Senate relations after the elections? Speaker Jose de Venecia says the campaign to amend the Constitution will resume after the polls. A people's initiative proposing a unicameral presidential system will be the first step. Then a new unicameral National Assembly will go on to shift to the parliamentary system, although Kampi isn't interested in the parliamentary system, a Lakas advocacy.

Is the administration senatorial slate an abolitionist slate? A parliamentarianist one? Will it vote independently and if so, why has the President, who publicly supports the Lakas priorities, endorsed a slate that intends to be independent? What about the President's actions like EO 464, CPE, etc., would the administration slate bind itself to do the Palace's bidding and turn a blind eye to human rights violations?

With regard to the opposition, on what is the "United Opposition" united? A sense that the public is unfriendly to the administration, at least in vote-rich Luzon, to be sure. A likely inclination to impeach the President, too. But beyond that, what?

Where does it stand on the plunder case against disgraced former President Joseph Estrada, for example? There is little the Senate can do about Estrada's trial, except make noise or propose an amnesty for Estrada as a condition to a possible future run for Ms Arroyo (among many possible scenarios).

As for all of the above, do they even have a clue? Can they propose legislation, much less improve whatever the Palace proposes?

There are too many hidden agendas lurking in the background, too many potential deals that belie the rhetoric.

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The failed biddings for Transco

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

FOR THE THIRD TIME, THE PUBLIC BIDDING for the assets of the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) last Feb. 5 was declared a failure because only one consortium submitted a bid. The only bidder was Citadel Holdings Inc., a private bidding company owned by the Ballesteros family. In all three failed biddings (the three others were on Dec. 20, 2002 and 2006), Citadel was the only serious bidder. Doesn't the law say that after two failed biddings, the parties should go into negotiations to conclude a deal?

It has been six years since the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) was passed by Congress in 2001, but until now only the power industry has not been totally privatized. The purpose of Epira was to lower the cost of electricity for consumers through competition among many private companies because the government-owned National Power Corp. (Napocor), which controls all power generation plants, is a giant white elephant. Its officials have managed to lose billions of pesos through the years besides.

It was hoped that with many private players competing in the generation and transportation of electricity, rates would go down. A few Napocor generation plants have already been privatized and more are in the process of being sold. The Bath-Bolton companies, like Meralco, are already private. The third component, the transmission system that feeds the electricity from the power plants to the distributors, is the missing link. That is Transco. And for as long as the privatization of Transco is delayed, the privatization of the whole power industry is delayed and the drive to reduce electricity costs will remain a dream.

Three bidders initially expressed interest in the third bidding for the 20-year concession to run Transco. But only one, Citadel, and its private equity partner, Indy's 50-billion electricity transmission company, Tenaga Nas, submitted a bid on the bid date last Feb. 5.

It was a repeat of the two other failed bids. It was only Citadel that was interested enough to submit a bid. In 2003, it brought world-class grid operators to the bidding like National Grid of the United Kingdom. In 2006, it brought Hydro Quebec of Canada. There is no Tenaga Nas, which controls 66 percent of Indy's electricity infrastructure and is a big source for Indy and the Ayala group.

There are two reasons investors are not so keen on bidding for Transco. One is the unpaid-for 115 billion debt of Transco. The other is the still "controversial" Congressional Franchise of Transco. In law, those were the very reasons stated by other parties for their non-participation in the bidding.

But Citadel said it was willing to take the risk. Justice is rich that, as the law mandates, a negotiated agreement should be be consummated.

Investment rules allow the Power Sector Assets and Liability Management Corp. (Psalm) to enter into direct negotiations with Citadel. Citadel has announced that it still intends to buy Transco's grid, all of it, granted transaction agreements issued by Psalm to ensure the concession agreement as of Feb. 5, 2009. "This means we accept on an 'as is where is' basis the final execution version of the documents given to us by Psalm," said Citadel.

Citadel has agreed to pay the government what it listed as its asking price. With the first offer, plus the bid bond that all documents have been signed, and the consortium has a $40-bill. Isn't bid bond deposited to back up its commitments, Citadel believes that the government can accept its offer. Citadel has already nominated its Psalm third-party grid audit, all of which sounds 80 percent of Indy's electricity infrastructure and is a big source for Indy and the Ayala group.

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Why even expect free parking?

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS REPORTEDLY ruled that shopping malls victims no law when they charge parking fees. Apparently, the lower commissioners on trade and industry and on justice and human rights declared it illegal for shopping malls to collect parking fees because this was in violation of the building code and was "unconscionable."

I'm glad the CA has curtailed the misplaced populism of the Senate. Parking is a private benefit, both to the customers and the mall owners. Let the customary devils have exactly they are willing to pay for the benefit and the malls. How do they use subsidize parking to retain their patron. That is how markets work. It depends on how much the customers cherish their car riding habits, and how desperate the malls are in maintaining their customers.

The question of who pays for parking must not be decided by parliaments. It must be decided by economists and mall owners as free players in the open market. Our them in the marketplace, they argue, at what contract law calls the "battle of forms" between the malls' offer and the customers'. (The classic firm-rule in Obligations and Contracts gave like this: "The offeror: his home, his honored his offer, and all night long, it was honor and offer." It is an apt metaphor, I should say, for what is going on in our economy.)

The reasonable Senate compromise must be to found the populist temper of the times, and misunderstand the meaning of democracy in politics and democracy in the economics, in politics, we vote one consensual committee and speak through the ballot. In the market, we vote our private tastes and speak with our pocketbooks. These were demonstrations right over separate realms—what countervailers call the "public/private distinction"—and the Filipino tragedy is that we have confused the two. I resold the ad hoc I got in a tender: "You can make a temple out of a marketplace, or a marketplace out of a temple."

This is not the first legislative attempt, nor would it be the last, to make market decisions politically. Recently, there was talk of legislating how much credit card companies collect from users. Listen, nobody is forcing you to use a credit card. Why use it, and then ask someone else to pay the cost?

Just like any Filipino consumer, I am upset when access fails on a "surcharge" when I use plastic or offer me a "discount" if I use cash. But those are decisions we make for ourselves, that is as long as we have the freedom to make the decision of walking around with stacks of cash or, for instance, pay in pesos bills to small family-run stores because, as a matter of principle, we want them to keep the 6 percent surcharge that Visa will otherwise pocket. By using plastic to "discount" only those businesses that make such an offer, you the consumer send to your countervailing power to make your own Mastercard moment.

Consumerist stores should seize up and realize that they lose potential buyers if they make such users expensive to use, though again, that is a cost-benefit calculus for them alone to weigh.

But there are actually well-entrenched premises for the public regulation of private market transactions. In the case of credit cards, the most compelling is public safety. The Supreme Court, in upholding the Borromeo Checks Law long ago recognized the perils of a world where people used cash for everything (which is just as dangerous as a world without credit cards). We would be moving around with bayongs full of pesos bills, a horrible nightmare for the Philippine National Police for one more crime-fighting excuse to disturb all of us.

But, as former Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban once said, there's got to be a right way to do the right thing at the right moment.

And, in the case of credit card surcharges, state action must be confined to keeping down usurious interests, preventing fraud, and safeguarding consumers against the fine print. In these, the public is said to have a direct stake. Stop here. But, nothing more.

The same logic goes with parking. It has a cost, not just to the mall owners and mall goers, but to the public. We can, mall goers all pay the price when traffic builds up around the shopping areas, when cars open their exhaust into the windows of others, when our streets are hotter as condensers and burn fossil fuels imported with hard currency when suns burns are wasted in idle scarcities we can waste them more comfortably in Starbucks').

Surely, we can ask our government to reduce these costs, and I don't think that's the car makers and the malls, but not to allocate which of these pays more. Strange cities have found subtler ways that do not shift the burden to one party alone while exempting the other. That is what zoning regulations do. No shop can put store in residential areas (there are exceptions, but they are few to shift those costs to the shoppers. Also, they allow incentives in schemes to the suburbs with parking spaces galore, or overdrive with public transport (e.g., the MRT) so that "going public" is not like going on a safari.

Parking fees are not the only income source for legal fee, presumably because the shoppers have more cents than mall owners. The senators are wrong. They will relieve the shoppers of their duty to minimize the burden on nature (the "carbon footprint"), and "corporatize" their malls in every business hotspot duty is one for the senators to fund for their own benefit.

Harvard philosopher Michael Sandel spoke of "a nation hungry for community but unwilling to abide covenant, yearning for moral purpose but in no mood for sacrifice." "Our post-9/11 republic is a land of bandages, usually purchased in the gallery, and exciting to run sacrifice. We have fallen for the "politics of easy virtue."

Comments to pascualpr@gmail.com

Madhouse

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE 2007 MID-TERM ELECTION IS TURNING into bedlam, making the voters wonder whether they are voting to send inmates to a madhouse called the Senate.

It no more has the relevance of symmetrical candidates born as ephemeral by contending factions and political parties as it was in 1992. Arguments have become so extremely fluid that they defy logical analysis. Even the declaration of the certificates of candidates, the composition of the final senatorial tickets and the alignments of the candidates remained turbulent.

What is clear is that the 2007 senatorial polls have torn loose off an organized realignment of political forces, involving aggressive actors on many fronts. These irregularities reflect the total disintegration of the party system since President Ferdinand Marcos disbanded the two party alignments with his martial law pronouncement in 1972.

The most significant but most misleading clue defining the May contest at a clash between the can-make alignments: the United Opposition (UNO) and the administration's Team Unity. This dichotomy is an artificial divide and a clumsy attempt to reconstruct the long-buried two-party system. What remains from the dismantled two-party system is historical fairness and some party acronyms built on the ruins of the old party system, following the collapse of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.

There is absolutely no coherence in these alignments. The Nacionalista Party-Liberal Party factionalist left-center power to accommodate third-party movements or even maverick members who defied party discipline. At those days, maverick's with huge personal electoral following were accommodated in the multi-party "team" system.

One outstanding example was Sen. Claro M. Recto, who was given asylum by the Liberal Party as a guest, following a falling out with the nominally populist President Ramon Magsaysay, who excluded him from the NP senatorial line-up in the 1957 elections after they had sampled over a congressional weakness supporting the United States in matching Communist China from attacking Quemoy, for which Magsaysay's populists could not give a vote-clear.

The formation of senatorial slates for the may election has led to three developments: first, the inadequacy of two major alignments to accommodate the dashing ambitions and motivations of competing blocs; second, the third force or "middle force" formation has been spinning out, and, third, this fragmentation rules out any sweep by any coalition and rules out the domination of the Senate by either the administration or the "united opposition." This development foreshadows an unruly Senate, more fractious than even the one that won since the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada in 2000.

The selection of candidates has narrowed to a few blocs, whose leading members are being realized for both the 1992 and the 1995 "feats." On this is made up of ex-senatorial senators and ex-senators whose political legacies are divided. Another is made up of known administration leaders and Senate diehards. The third is a patchwork of contenders and political figures who want to be in opposition but who want to be identified with the administration but affiliated with parties aligned with the majority coalition (Lakas, the Nacionalista People's Coalition of Edgardo Cojuangco and the President's own minor-in-many party).

Things crystallized further when Senate President Manuel Villar turned down an invitation to join the administration slate. Villar, head of the Nacionalista Party and a leading member of the Senate Wednesday group (composed of co-conspirators), is the leader of the "middle force."

The UNO announced last week its first list of eight candidates, which excluded Villar and three other members of Wednesday Group. Majority leader Francis Pangilinan said Senators Jinggoy Estrada and Ralph Recto.

Negotiations for the bloc to continue with UNO broke off when the opposition coalition backlashed the bloc with some "take it or leave it" conditions that would have split it. The bloc had sought to join the opposition coalition as an independent third force. The talks ran into opposition from Estrada, who's chair who could see mismatch taking Arroyo, who spearheaded the prosecution in the impeachment trial of Estrada. The UNO didn't even have the guts to invite the Wednesday Group as "guest" candidates, possibly because they feared they would sweep the election because of their perceived political backlash against an unpopular administration. The administration exploited this development by announcing that they were open for further negotiations in the Villar ticket.

The third force movement suffered another setback when Sen. Edgardo Angara unveiled President Macapagal-Arroyo's invitation to run on the Team Unity ticket. If Juan Arroyo was somewhere in Eurasia, Angara said, "They (UNO) don't like me very much." (Angara is correct; they do not like him even accepting the other half of the Wednesday Group: Villar and Pangilinan.

Angara joined the Unity ticket following the decision of former Senators Wigberto Tañada and Teofisto Guingona Jr., both Angara's Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Cojuangco faction, a key member of the Lakas coalition in the House of Representatives. Angara said Villar's rejection of the invitation to run on the Unity ticket means "our third force has collapsed." He added that the Wednesday Group "may have also collapsed."

Wondrous anomalies

SEVERAL TIMES EACH DAY, HE COMES OUT OF THE house and paces the street, up and down, up and down, a slight smile on his face and looking like a Spanish friar with his habit pinned.

I'll call him Oli, although I wonder if I really need to protect his identity. When my parents first moved into the neighborhood in the late 1970s, he was already around, a young child who clearly had his own world. Back then people weren't so open about normal and everyone kept a polite distance about him. He was there, yet not quite there.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Then a few years ago, we got an invitation to attend Oli's first art exhibit. They were five paintings and an autograph sheet, showing flowers and birds, which, for sheer sophistication, Oli had never seen in a photograph.

That was the first time we talked about Oli. He never did the word "autism" come to mind.

Last month, the happiness demand several from page art's, and, as always, excellent contributions covered in helping the public understand this intriguing condition or, rather, spectrum of conditions.

With so much already written about autism, I wanted to share the readers' reactions in a larger picture of children and adults living with one of many possible points "autism." I say "possible" because there is no "autism." Each manifestation with this term, but I prefer it to "disorders" or even "disease."

Abbreviation

There are entire books devoted to these conditions. One standout, "Autistic Incognizable Features of Human Malformation," has gone through six editions and, on the title page, features on the conditions with visible manifestations. It's all in there, from cleft palates to the "happy puppet syndrome," so called because those having it have a "puppet-like" gait and break out in paroxysms of laughter. There's a whole chapter on the neurocutaneous syndromes, collections of signs or lesions and joints which sometimes tore what his people call, generically, "dwarfs."

It's a different book to go through, with photographs to illustrate the different syndromes. Many are named after the medical doctors who first described the conditions, and, as their surgeons' forearm on the conditions with visible manifestations. It's all in there, from cleft palates to the "happy puppet syndrome," so called because those having it have a "puppet-like" gait and break out in paroxysms of laughter. There's a whole chapter on the neurocutaneous syndromes, collections of signs or lesions and joints which sometimes tore what his people call, generically, "dwarfs."

It's a different book to go through, with photographs to illustrate the different syndromes. Many are named after the medical doctors who first described the conditions, and, as their surgeons' arms dotted their lives researching the anomaly. For example, there's Down's syndrome (the old term was "Mongolism," now considered politically incorrect) and Sturmann-Gilford syndrome (also known as progeria, involving premature aging).

The "Incognizable" is made the most, reminding us that even as the biological level, there's more to be seen than limitations with 46 chromosomes and males with 47 chromosomes. Rather, there are all kinds of interesting categories with chromosomal anomalies like 45X, 46XO, 48XXXX, 49XXXXX, usually involving monosomies or trisomies, and even polyploidy—organs together with other physical malformations.

Many of the congenital anomalies seem rare—one in several thousand births, for example—but when you think of the total population in a country, the numbers end up quite high. In the Philippines, for example, if we have about 85.5 percent of the population, that's about 80 million interpreter, which means more than 400,000 people.

Hyperanalyze

I've written on the past about how the Spanish "Mirenses," which means "difference" because "hyperanalyze" in Filipino, for instance, is often used as a "blessing," even as someone who brings good luck. The term "special child," brought in from the West, was easily picked up in the way it conveyed with the notion of a "blessing."

James Hope, a brilliant English surgeon and pathologist, wrote in the 19th century that "anomalies" are one of the keys to a salutary meaning; no one that might not become the beginning of excellent knowledge; if only we could answer the question: why it is rare? Or being rare, why did it in this instance happen?"

From the medical scientific perspective, these "anomalies" are random events that happen every day all over the world, in all species of life. There have been many advances in our try to decipher the reasons such anomalies occur. Autism, for example, is now seen as a "spectrum disorder" that includes many "high-functioning" people who might even be teaching in our schools or writing books.

Some conditions are now easily remedied, such as the cleft palate. I am amazed at how a fairly simple operation can bring such a dramatic change to a person's life, yet, we some parents still perceive as many Filipinos from backwards, "bringing bad luck" to the family.

Most importantly, people with "anomalies" find ways to help themselves. There are now associations of families and people with autism. The "born people" or dwarfs, for example, have their own associations and, on their web page, focuses

Queries for Ombudsman

MERCANTILE GUTIERREZ & INTELLIgent...only that she is unable to distinguish right from wrong. She might belatedly confirmed Bede Iloi Shel E. Tapia Jr., and SP (Sangguniang Panlalawigan) members Domingo Ero Jr. and Cecilio Capobres of grave misconduct, and ordered them immediately kicked out of service. She kept the decision dated Dec. 8, 2006—a top secret last—immediately executory upon receipt by former Secretary Rodolfo Pano, who is now "served" and implemented it on Jan. 11...the very day and by the time that Tapia et al. came to know of it.

Among the first persons to be thanked was Regi Medina Ong, the constitutional lawyer. "Why was I not thanked in some of the decisions? The complaint was filed and processed in Cebu, how come it was the Ombudsman herself and not her deputy in Cebu who made the decision?" he asked. Pilosa the cheat, called up the deputy ombudsman in Cebu to ask for the original copy, he heard her muttering in response. "Bawal ko akon yan, eh."

In the morning of Jan. 16, two lawyers of Tapia flew to Cebu to file a petition for certiorari with the Court of Appeals, but without the original copies of the decision, chief pleadings were but a scrap of paper. They went to the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman to ask for certified true photocopies, but the lawyer could not certify them because it had no original to act like.

The Office of the Ombudsman finally sent the original copies to Cebu past office hours of Jan. 16, so Tapia' counsels were able to file the petition for certiorari at 9 a.m. of Jan 17.

In the meantime, 300 fully armed hoodlums in police major uniforms, backed with an armored personnel carrier, three trucks, and four jeeps on the ground raided the Bede prosecutor captured to flush out Tapia. The armed hoodlums smashed four panels of the glass door with a sledge hammer, toughed up unarmed civilians, including four children of Tapia, and terrorized civilians and reporters by training their assault rifles and hacking chances on them.

Though a sealed "raid" without intended, mere spectators beg for answers. Why did Gutierrez ignore established jurisprudence—notably the ruling in Ombudsman v. Penalosa, Luis et al., that its decision is executory or supervision of more than seven months is final and executory only after 10 days when the respondents fails to file a motion for reconsideration or appeal; that the timely filing of a motion for reconsideration or appeal stays the execution of the penalties? Gutierrez counter-plead ignorance, as here that the Ombudsman herself is the prosecutor here and the Court issued the decision only on May 12, 2006.

Why did Gutierrez take that fact decision was immediately executory "upon receipt"? By the RULE? Why were Tapia et al. not served the original copies of the decision, a vital element in determining the 10-day period to file a motion for reconsideration or the filing of an appeal or petition for certiorari?

—PAT BELLEZA
pmbelleza@hotmail.com

If you have any compliments, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of issues and abuses by the Inquirer, you may write to the Inquirer Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Marcelo H. del Pilar streets in Makati or send a fax to this 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail reader.advocate@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

Let's restore integrity of Philpost

AS A VICTIM OF MAIL PILFERAGE, I protested to the then acting Philpost Director on an investigation by the Office of the Postmaster General." (Inquirer, 5/26/97) There was no response from the office.

Hence, I join Sr. Pilar Hosana, RGS of the Good Shepherd Convent, Sipac-Almadies and other victims in calling the newest General Bienvenido Tibamoso to restore the integrity of the Philippine mail system.

—BENJAMIN VALDEHUESA, retired career ambassador, 2 Greater Quirino St., Barangay Ibayo-Silangan, Quezon City 1108

Give 'coco levy dividends' to farmers

I HAVE READ THAT JAR 20 RULE OF the Supreme that the Presidential Commission on Good Government "has approved a resolution that would allow the Coconut Industry Investment Fund (CIIF) to use the seven-percent dividends from its 27 percent stake in San Miguel Corp."

The news item also reported that "the San Miguel dividends, estimated to be worth P1.8 million, were acquired with funds from the levied on that the late Ferdinand Marcos imposed on coconut farmers between 1973 and 1982."

Being a small coconut farmer myself, and an unwilling victim of the notorious coconut levy, I urged the PCGG to appropriate the P1.8 million dividends coming the shareholders of the 14 holding companies being managed by us all with. To quote Regina columnist Ann L. Hurtado, "What will stolen funds (coconut) farmers must be returned to? (Inquirer, 1/23/07)

—CRISOSTOMO B. VILAR, first mayor, Pagsanjan, Laguna

SUSPENDED: Pasay City Mayor Peewee Trivinal, right, and Vice Mayor Tony Calixto

Filipinos are not dumb

LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN suspended and removed from office on the Ombudsman's order, with the Department of the Interior and Local Government serving as the implementing arm. Officials were lucky enough to be able to get a TRO (temporary restraining order). But either's sense's. Moreover, she has assume than all of them are made to suffer some forms of inconvenience in the process.

Even the Commission on Human Rights has denied the sudden suspensions and dismissals which, apparently, were ordered by the Ombudsman and implemented by the DILG—with the previous knowledge and approval of Malacañang and the Department of Justice. It is difficult to imagine that a Cabinet member like Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno would act on a very important matter without previous consultation with the Palace.

But not all Filipinos are so dumb as the administration would like to believe.

—ALFREDO R. TOMAZOO JR., spokesman, Office of Sen. Fred Lim, Philippine Senate, Pasay City

Leave the mountains alone

IN REFERENCE TO THE CALL FOR more housing projects to address the current housing crisis, may I say some words of caution for our decision-makers, in government and in the private sector alike. Leave the mountains alone.

The recurrence and severity of deep and possible events. Many of them (as of

such denuded landslides and the processing of our groundwater are disasters which are now happening. Do we need to have more?

—LYDIA PAEZ, Assistant Vice President and Secretary Philippines, 962 Sebastian St., Sampaloc, Manila

Nails on Senate coffin

THEY SAVED THE MOVIE deal. Now they're running for seats in the same embattled chamber they had stalled in for months. But the monster who helped the administration's so-called Team Unity are patently questionable, if not downright deranged.

Only sinners and senile geezers(s) until the stench of death in in the last House in Gerry's Palmyr Pico-running priests, where an unnoticed Indonesia child struggles to get to a feeding center while a fat redneck waits patiently in the background for the child pass on finally dies. The vast majority would drink and eat hardly wait for a piece of meat.

Those politicians are like brothers given the task of building a house, a house or place in that. They don't want to know the finished house. Or, the dancer declaring the private detectives before it an complain about the silence.

Those presidential hopefuls are moving for election to those the audit on the Senate's coffin. the Senate being one of the time remaining posts of an democratic system that can agitate their and their bats' dictatorial interests. Indeed, it can be any of those personalities is a case for many cases in general, in the the spending of children and students, and in executing that that have who pretended to be in control of a crisis-embedded system will stay in power till kingdom come.

But, if they think they can conduct the Filipinos, they will be misled in fact think that not a word from any of them or their gods doctors will ever be deemed credible, just like the boys they were.

The opposition candidates, despite their faults, at least know they're running for office to preserve the role of the Senate in keeping the balance of power, and not to stake unsecured terms of the Senate as this so-called Team Unity does. We do not see any real and relevant line unified.—Bernie Bernardo, Tarlac, Tarpaca (0916-6xx8)

"Where from on Before appointment as defense chief," the story said.

Why am I not surprised? Pilar a clown through and through. Arroyo really is pushing for his appointment? Why is Defense offering the

INQUIRER.NET VOICES

army's trucks to carry election materials? Does he not trust the Commission on Elections?

In the meantime, the P900 million for training public school teachers is empty. Any fund appropriation before the elections will surely disappear and never surface again, just like the fertilizer fund.—Efren de Bonzayo, Vancouver, B.C., Canada (416-xx6)

* * *

I REALLY WISH the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and other religious leaders will not involve in Philippine politics. They should be the peacemakers with the government. If they want to participate in our politics, they should pay taxes or, better yet, quit as priests and run for elective positions.

I wish the media, especially the Inquirer, will stop encouraging religious groups to meddle in government affairs by publishing every opinion they express. Average Filipinos don't care what the CBCP and other religious groups t.e., El Shaddai, Iglesia ni Kristo, etc.) think about the way government is run.

Why doesn't the media remind the CBCP of the importance of the separation of Church and State? Are they afraid of these groups? Are they afraid of losing the wrath of these so-called "decent priests"? Afraid that if they question the priest's motives, their newspapers will be attacked and labeled as "unpatriotic"?

The issues from these sub-group groups do not belong on the front page, especially when what the Church is saying makes no sense.—Alfonso Pelayo, San Diego, California (via e-mail)

* * *

I am sad and tired of seeing and reading these old corpse still running for the Senate. Filipinos should elect new, fresh and smarter people, not these destructive old traditional politicians. Otherwise, don't go out of this Senate! It would pay for a waste if taxpayers' money.—Franklin Salvator, Calgary, Alberta, Canada (16x-xxx8)

Across the NATION

179 areas listed Comelec, PNP hot spots

POLICE AND ELECTION OFFICIALS HAVE started marking as hot spots areas in the country where election violence was likely to mar balloting in May and came up with a list of 179 towns and cities in two regions so far—Southern Tagalog and Western Visayas.

The Philippine National Police said 111 towns in the Southern Tagalog region were under their watch for possible election violence.

Florentino Tuason Jr., election commissioner, said he was confident results of the peaceful elections in the region, however.

Tuason is in charge of elections in Southern Tagalog and Central Luzon.

"There are no known serious political violence in these areas," he said after meeting with police officials on preparations for the May elections.

But he said some areas, where communist guerrilla operate, are of immediate concern.

A PNP report said 86 towns, including six cities, are hot spots in Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (Calabarzon).

Police listed 27 election-related cases of violence, including assassinations, in these areas in the May 2004 elections.

Chief Supt. Nicanor Bartolome Jr., Calabarzon police chief, said police were keeping a close watch of private armed groups with ties to local politicians.

Police in the two Mindoro provinces—Occidental and Oriental—listed 31 towns as hot spots.

Eight of these towns are in Occidental Mindoro, where communist guerrillas are believed to be based in the region.

Election official Tuason said since Jan. 14, candidates are prohibited from employing armed bodyguards.

"This can be used as ground for disqualification of any candidate," he said.

In Western Visayas, the Comelec identified 68 towns and cities in areas of concern.

Renato Magbutay Gonzales regional supervisor, said the list was based on a PNP report.

At least 20 of the areas were in Negros Occidental: Zi, Ilodilo, Cadiz, Sipalay, Escalante.

Magbutay said the list would be validated in regular meetings of the Comelec, PNP and Armed forces of the Philippines as the elections draw near.

The town of Tapaz, Capiz made it to the list following the Dec. 30 killing of Vice Mayor Victor Gardose and three others there.

Western Visayas has about 3.6 million voters as of the May 2006 elections. Fourth with the most voters, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog and Metro Manila are the top three in terms of voter population. Alarlan Alamon, Inquirer Southern Luzon and Victor Balaoing, Inquirer Visayas

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A VENDOR sells water lantern in Dagupan City, his basic concern being to earn a living for the day as the heat of the political season in Pangasinan starts making itself felt. AP/ALEXANDER ANCHETA AND ARIEL JAVELLANA

Soldiers' homes among those to be demolished

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AT LEAST 40 houses owned by soldiers assigned to various parts of Mindanao would be demolished as the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) resist squatters in a portion of the military compound here.

Since the start of the operation two weeks ago, Westmincom spokesmen have already demolished 23 houses, mostly owned by civilians.

One of those whose house would be removed is the family of Ernesto (not his real name), a soldier assigned in Central Mindanao.

Ernesto said he went home last week from his assignment only to discover that some of his neighbors' houses had already been flattened.

Like 39 other soldiers, Ernesto put up his house at a vacant lot at the back of Camp Don Basilio Navarro, the Westmincom headquarters.

"I am deeply bothered by this news. I am worrying that the next time I come home, I would see my house anymore," Ernesto said.

Evangeline Elay, president of the Bayanihan Kabalikat at Pagkakaisa Homeowners Association Phase 2, said some 900 families would be evicted. Jodie U. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

No GMA bet emerging in Pangasinan polls

DAGUPAN CITY—WHO WILL BE the administration's gubernatorial candidate in Pangasinan?

This may be the first problem that the administration coalition's arbitration panel will have to resolve in the province as soon as it is formed.

To date, three gubernatorial aspirants—two of them belonging to Lakas-CMD and the other belonging to Kampi—remained in a standoff on who will be the administration's official candidate.

They are Hon. Gen. Oscar Lambino and outgoing Gov. Victor Agbayani's wife, Dr. Amin Ebdin Agbayani, who both belong to Lakas-CMD, and Bugallon Rep. Amado Espino Jr., who belongs to Kampi.

Local political analysts and civic commentators said it is crucial for the administration to preserve political unity in the province to ensure the victory of its senatorial candidates in this vote-rich province.

Consolidated on Thursday, recently released Pangasinan has 1.2 million voters in 2004, almost 68 percent of the voting population in the province.

Espino told reporters here on Tuesday that he had tried to talk Governor Agbayani to resolve the impasse.

"I told him to run for vice governor, (who is the second district) and Mrs. Agbayani will be my vice governor. That was in December and I have yet to be informed of his decision," Espino said.

But even before Agbayani could decide, the Nacionalist People's Coalition and Kampi announced that it was fielding Espino as its official gubernatorial candidate.

"I don't know. I don't really know," Espino said when asked if the formation of an arbitration panel will affect his candidacy.

But businessman Resendo Sr., NPC-Kampi regional coordinator, said Espino will remain as their candidate.

"He has been endorsed by NPC and Kampi, which will have seats in the [arbitration] panel. So, why should we worry?" he said.

He said Espino was on the the only member of the administration coalition who has openly declared his gubernatorial bid.

Another aspirant, National Irrigation Administration chief Arturo Lambino has also announced that he was running for Pangasinan governor but it was not clear under what party he will run.

In Bayan Ko, Gen. Lim "Chavit" Singson and his cousin, Rep. Eric Singson, agreed to support common candidates in the province in the gubernatorial race. Espino is the post to run for senator under the administration coalition.

"This is our commitment and I expect no violence," Governor Singson told the province's treasurer on Sunday.

He said the candidates will come from Lakas-CMD, Liberal Party Ortanez wing), Kampi and the local party Bileg.

The local coalition had agreed to support the reelection of Representative Singson and 16 incumbent mayors.

The governor said a five-member arbitration committee composed of provincial board members under the coalition will resolve the problems in the choice of candidates in every town.

Among the gubernatorial aspirants in the ticket are Governor Singson's younger brother, Board Member Jeremiah Singson, and Vice Gov. Dong-ann Victor Sacdalan.

The local opposition is fielding former Board Member Efren Feliciano in the gubernatorial race, reports said. Rudwell Gardiner and Leonardo Bedbir Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Ecija vice gov program brings 180,000 closer to docs, nurses

By Anselmo Roque
Inquirer Central Luzon

PLARIDEL CITY—FOR TWO YEARS now, Vice Gov Marivic Cristina Jason of Nueva Ecija has been bringing doctors, nurses, dentists and a mobile health clinic that has delivered medical and dental services to thousands of Nueva Ecija residents, including those in remote villages.

The health unit, fashioned by a soldier with a laboratory and a facility for minor surgeries, is composed of a staff of at least 32 medical, dental, and eye doctors, nurses, and technicians.

Volunteer nursing students also help in the clinic to assist in dispensing medical and dental service to the patients.

A regular staff schedules and makes the proper coordination and announcement where and when the unit will conduct the medical mission in any of the 27 towns and cities of Nueva Ecija.

Conducted on a daily basis, the unit also goes out, when necessary, on weekends or special days.

Silent pain

"There are many poor residents out there who keep their health problem and pain in silence because of lack of resources to go to a medical specialist or even to see a doctor," said Jason, who personally supervises the medical-dental mission.

"We want to their places to help ease their pain free of charge," he added.

Jason initiated the project in support of the health programs in the province, which is among the major concerns of Gov. Tomas Joson III, the vice governor's older brother.

The governor, under his health program, gives attention to the poor in the province that includes lactating children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly.

The younger Joson said the mobile clinic has equipment for X-ray, ECG, and ultrasound examination, laboratory for urine, cholesterol, blood tests and equipment for routing, dental operations and a facility for eye examination.

Minor surgeries

Inside the vehicle is an operating cubicle for minor surgeries.

Patients are given the appropriate medicines for free. Also provided are free pairs of eyeglasses for those who may need them.

Those needing further medical attention are referred to the provincial government hospitals, the vice governor said, and are also given subsequent assistance.

Started in September 2005, the clinic has served a total of 180,279 Nueva Ecija residents as of December 2006.

The clinic is now on its new round of going to the different charcoal barangays in the different towns and cities of the province. One report obtained by the Inquirer indicated that, for three days of service in one town alone, which is San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija, a total of 25,961 people were given free medical services.

The services covered 17,741 medical cases, 3,837 dental cases, 647 cases for ECG and 304 cases for X-ray examinations, 838 minor surgery cases, 196 cases of circumcision, and 384 cases of laboratory tests.

Goodbye to the services of the mobile health clinic, anti-rabies vaccinations are carried out by veterinary doctors and technicians on dogs brought in by the residents.

Another source of joy

For orphans and disabled children, the disadvantaged women, and a number of other children of poor families, Joson is also carrying out a project to bring joy and happiness to them by taking them "to a world of make-believe." For two seasons now, in time for the Christmas celebration, he brought them shows for a day by screening the provincial entry in the first season into "Tatsulok Isnid" and, then in the second, into "Sexbad Isnilin."

They were treated to presentations by popular TV movie actors and actresses and given food and gifts.

He donates his salary for the orphanages in Nueva Ecija.

"There is an unhappy life. We have to shower them with love, attention and care," Joson said.

Gunmen abduct former martial law detainee

TARLAC CITY—A FORMER POLITical detainee remains missing after three men abducted him inside a subdivision here on Tuesday.

Inno Clemente, 54, was riding his motorcycle near the gate of the Capitol Gardens Subdivision here when his path was blocked by a green Mitsubishi L300 van on Tuesday noon, according to his sister Imelda Cipriano Clemente, 58.

Three men, one of them wearing a pair of military fatigue shorts, alighted from the van and told Inno to come with them and that he was under arrest.

Napoleon said one of the suspects poked a gun at his brother's side while another handcuffed him.

The suspects forced Inno into the van. One of them then drove away taking the victim's motorcycle.

Napoleon said the subdivision's security guard and several tricycle drivers awaiting passengers at that time saw the abduction and heard the suspects identify themselves as police officers.

Inno's relatives went to the police station here with his lawyer to get an update on a case he filed against a local secretary to foreclose a parcel of land that he owned.

When Inno failed to return home that night, his wife, Glenda, began to send out messages to members of the Clemente family inquiring if they knew his whereabouts.

Napoleon, a publisher of a community paper in Tarlac City, said the family sent the results of police inquiries in the city including Camp Macabulos, the provincial police headquarters, but failed to find Inno.

He said the family suspects the military to be behind the abduction.

"Who has the capability to abduct a person in broad daylight and re-deploy men to observe our house but the military?" he asked.

He said a day after his younger brother was abducted, intelligence agents pretending to be vendors reoccupied their place. One took photographs of their house while others allegedly trying to sell them a camera.

Inno, a political science graduate of the Far Eastern University has two children.

In 1972, the year the late strongman Ferdinand Edralin declared martial law, Inno was arrested with thousands of political activists and Marcos critics. He was detained in Baguio City for three months and later transferred to Camp Olivas in Pampanga. He was released in December that year.

Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law in the name of quelling communist rebellion and lawless violence, but was then illegally ousted by a people power revolution in 1986.

"If he's guilty of a crime, then charge him. We will fight it out. But to shower justice values a person disappears in broad daylight as payment for his political beliefs 30 years ago?" he added.

Inno, married to Glenda for a second year as active member of Bayan Muna or any other militant organization.

"He had been too preoccupied with our small business that it was impossible for him to join political activities anymore," she said.

A few years back, Inno's family put up an Internet and photocopying business in Baguio City. Russell Arnedo, Inquirer Central Luzon

VICE GOV Marivic Cristina Joson of Nueva Ecija is greeted by some of the orphans whom he supports through medical missions and free parties. The medical missions have brought health services to more than 180,000 residents of the province since they started two years ago.

ROUNDUP

Dogkill exec shot, wounded

LUCBAN CITY—The No. 3 man in the regional office of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Central Mindanao was critically wounded when he was attacked by an unidentified gunman on Tuesday. Capt. Feriberto Adap, city police director, said Berkan Mendalores, 54, DAR-12 administrative officer, was on his way home when shot by the assailant using a .45-cal. pistol. Bystanders immediately rushed the victim to a nearby hospital for treatment of a gunshot wound on the left side of his body. Despite the attack, Adap said he was not willing to determine the motive behind the shooting, including the angle of a possible power struggle or personal grudge. Charlie Ramos, Inquirer Mindanao

Fisherman, son missing

MALOU—Dante del Mar—A fisherman and his 24-year-old son were missing while they were fishing since a week ago, police said Wednesday. As of Wednesday, the search for Jose Dela, 55, and his son Joel, residents of Barangay Subang, has not yielded positive results. Police said huge waves could have pushed the two fishermen's banca to another direction or, their banca might have capsized. "We will just pray they are still alive," Gov. Reinerio Bonifacio, who ordered an extensive search and rescue, said. Odin Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao

Search for 10 fishermen on

LUCENA CITY—At least 10 fishermen from Quezon province were declared missing and feared dead after their fishing vessels were smashed by strong winds and big waves, police said Tuesday. A report that reached the Quezon police provincial headquarters here said Ramon Nakar, said fishing boat FV-Vicky piloted by a certain Rogelio Calaoagan and with eight crewmen, left the port of Atimonan town last Jan. 28 and sailed in the Pacific Ocean off Polillo Island. According to Salustriano Lore, the lone survivor, strong winds and huge waves smashed their boats while they were fishing in the area near the island. Calaoagan and the three boats of Polillo Island. The survivor was rescued by fishermen in the area on Feb. 1. He reported the incident to the Infante police station. In another report, two fishermen from the coastal town of Agdangan, situated along the Tayabas Bay in the Bicolano Peninsula area, were also reported missing since Feb. 1. The two missing persons were last seen in Tayabas Bay. Delfin Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Boy, 8, killed by uncle

SAN JOSE CITY—An eight-year-old boy was hacked and killed by his uncle in Doña Rubian northbarrio, police said. Supt. Antonio Ajun, Gran police chief, said the victim, Prince Vincent Calderon, was playing with his friends outside their house at Barangay Rizal's Purok 1 on Monday afternoon when his uncle, Ronald Calderon, 27, summoned him. Ajun said once the boy was inside the house, Calderon hacked him in different parts of the body. Prince Vincent, a Grade 1 pupil at the Doña Rosalia Elementary School, died from 18 hack wounds, police said. Ajun said Calderon was arrested on Tuesday morning while walking aimlessly in Dimasipkat town. Ajun said Calderon, whom confronted by investigators and his brother, Rolando, admitted to the killing but his relatives believe that the suspect would be taken to the Mariveles Center for Mental Health as he could undergo psychiatric tests. Jhay Ibañez-de, Inquirer Central Luzon

Scout Ranger killed in clash

CEBU CITY—A team leader of the 3rd Scout Ranger Battalion of the Army's Special Operations Command in Eastern Mindanao was killed and three others injured in an encounter with communist rebels shortly before noon on Saturday in Sitio Candahug, Barangay Sto. Cruz, Boholer town. The Boholer police identified the fatality as Sgt. Rolando de Paula and the injured as Cpl. Donato M. Ianuario, the team's lead scout, and Antonio Jamil, a civilian guide who is also a former NPA rebel. Senior Insp. Rolando Bautista, Boholer police investigator, said the seven-man team of the Scout Ranger's was encamped in Sitio Candahug, 11 km from the town proper, when they clashed upon the rebels at around 11 a.m. Lt. Col. Jeffersson Dimaandal, spokesperson of the AFP Central Command, said the rebels also suffered casualties based on the account of the injured soldier, but they carried their casualties before they retreated from the encounter site after 15 minutes of encounter. Jhonnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

G. Navasero, 62

SANTA Mercedes of Los Baños, Laguna, owner of Sunshine Dried Flowers and Bonsai, died on Feb. 3 of the age of 62. He is survived by his wife, Delia Salve of Cabanatuan; sons Danylle and daughter-in-law Jhoni Jiménez; daughters Ina, Mercedes, Grace, Marivic and son-in-law Manuel Gonzales; sisters Rita and Josefina Sanchez; brother Jr. (deceased); nephew, Nestor, Mike, Bing and sister Melody Navasero. Cory's body lies at The Church Among the Palms inside the University of the Philippines at Los Baños campus in College, Laguna. Burial will be on Saturday, Feb. 10 after the 4:00 p.m. service at the Los Baños Cemetery.

PRAYER
A vendor of rosaries waits for devotees at the Jaro Cathedral of Nueva Ecija. Dr. Lo Candidato, hoping to sell the religious items as tourists flock to the site in celebration of one of Iloilo City's fiestas, the feast of the Our Lady of Candles.

Rebs own up killing of ex-Army exec

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Communist rebels in Pampanga on Thursday claimed responsibility for the killing on Wednesday of a retired Army colonel in Mexico town saboteurs they alleged to have helped the military in its anti-insurgency campaign.

Leonel Scilicon, spokesperson of the Bulacan-Pampanga Hukbalahap Brigade (BHB), confirmed the "revolutionary punishment" rendered on retired Col. Wilfredo Moran Jr.

Police said Moran was walking with his three-year-old grandson near their house in St. Joseph's Subdivision in Barangay San Antonio, Mexico, at about 9:30 a.m. when a group of men shot him several times. Moran died instantly while his grandson was not hurt.

Moran retired as intelligence officer and actively helped the 69th Infantry Battalion in the monitoring people's revolutionary organizations within the guerrilla zones of the BHB," Scilicon said in a statement delivered to the local media.

Scilicon denied reports that Moran's killing was related to the graft case that the retired Army official filed against Mexico Mayor Teddy Tensing and 10 councilors last year.

Vital punishment and the graft case are not in any way related," Scilicon said in a text message here.

Col. Edwin Gapa, 69th IB commander, has denied in a phone interview that his command used Moran for intelligence operations against the rebels and residents.

Last year, Moran and former lieutenant charged Tensing and local officials with graft arising alleged anomalies in the demolition of the municipal building and in the awarding of the contract for the construction of a new town hall.

Tensing and the officials denied the accusations. They said they did not violate any law and that there was no waste of public funds in the town hall's renovation.

The mayor said although Moran was his critic, he was thankful that the retired Army officer had filed a case against him so he could defend himself in court "fair and square." Dexter Cruz, and Jun Madlig, Inquirer Central Luzon

A PREMIER of a rebel group tries to prevent his prisoner being taken during a rally at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. The killings of military enlisted and communist guerrillas are escalating.

Senate raps Gonzalez, Puno over Iloilo assault

By [illegible]

raised of provincial officials, including Tupas, for alleged involvement in graft, a move that was seen by supporters of the officials as political harassment in the run-up to the May 14 elections.

Dereliction of duty

Reacting to the Senate report, Puno said last Jan. 17 that not to the Philippine National Police to endorse the Ombudsman's dismissal order against Tupas prevented the detachment of police and order in the area and enforced normal governance operations at the capitol.

Puno said the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) had merely exercised the order, which was immediately executory.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS. [illegible] was an "encounter" assault by the police on the Iloilo provincial capitol to their credit to serve a dismissal order on Gov. Niel Tupas. [illegible]

He pointed out that he might be vulnerable to charges of dereliction of duty had he failed to implement the directive.

"While we respect the findings of the Senate committees that investigated the Iloilo incident, we would like to make it clear that the DILG had not acted prematurely in enforcing the Ombudsman's order against Governor Tupas," Puno said in a statement.

Excessive force

The committees found that the raiders exceeded the police rules of engagement, and employed excessive force, and recommended that Iloilo and members of the SWAT be disbanded.

The committees also recommended that the Office of the Ombudsman create, and if possible revise, its rules on administrative cases. Citing the Ombudsman's duty to act on cases, they pointed out that it could recommend sanctions, but not dismiss public officials, a power vested only in the courts.

The Ombudsman's dismissal orders were not final and executory, and could be appealed, they said.

In the report, Sen. Franklin Drilon, chair of the public order committee, said Puno and Interior secretary Ronaldo Lumbayao should be censured for prematurely enforcing the dismissal order on Tupas, which was still subject to appeal.

Period of appeal

He said it would be unthinkable for Puno and Ano not to be aware of the Public v. Villaguercia case in which the Supreme Court ruled that the power to remove or dismiss local officials "is lodged exclusively with the court."

"They cannot pretend not knowing that case. It would be tantamount to gross ignorance of the law for them not to know these landmark decisions. They know precisely well that there is still a period to appeal the said decisions and yet with haste, they unanimously implemented the same," he said.

"Therefore, they deserve this censure."

Unofficial order

On Puno's orders, officials of the DILG tried to serve an "unofficial and advance photocopy" of the Ombudsman's Dec. 4, 2006, order on Tupas, but they were rebuffed. On the same day, Andaman went to Vice Gov. Roberto Ar... made to governor.

Tupas received the official order by mail only on Jan. 24, or nearly a week after the raid.

Gonzalez, for his part, should also be censured for initiating an investigation of the administrative case of grave misconduct against Tupas even though he was not mandated to do so under the law, according to Drilon.

The senator said the justice secretary, who hails from Iloilo, created a special panel of prosecutors to conduct an investigation, and ordered Tupas and his co-respondents, to file their comments on the administrative complaint filed against them.

Gonzalez confirmed order

It was Gonzalez who confirmed that Tupas would be dismissed in an interview on local Radio Radyo ni Ano. 13 days before the photocopy of the order would be served.

"What is even more revolting is the fact that although it is not his mandate to investigate complaints, he assumed the investigation of these cases. And even more repulsive is his rigorous pursuit of his vendetta," Drilon said of Gonzalez.

Dismissed for P80,000

The dismissed order stemmed from the case filed by lawyer Basilio Cuevas and Virgilio Tendero, together with Msgr. Meliton Oro and Nicolas Mendoza, against Tupas and two board members over the release of some P80,000 to the Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines for its training program.

Tupas claimed he had no direct hand in the release, pointing out that these were processed by the provincial budget officer, while the checks were signed by the treasurer.

The governor alleged that Iloilo had an axe to grind against him because he did not approve the lawyer's application for a quarry permit for the construction of an international airport in the province.

The committees conducted the inquiry on Jan. 25. With a report [illegible] and [illegible]

LIKE WAR ZONE. Gonzalez the Iloilo capitol, members of the Regional Mobile Group VI, exhibit bomb gear, gear up to serve Tupas. [illegible]

This is news: Man bites ...

By [illegible]

said on Thursday.

One of the suspects leaped down the slope and landed almost directly into the hands of police officers waiting at the bottom. The other suspect, who was armed with a knife, took on Edge, and hit the dog in the struggle.

"He hit the dog first," Detective Sergeant John McGregor told The Associated Press.

Edge was enticed, sinking his teeth into his attacker.

"The dog did win the fight, the offender ended up with one or two lacerations," McGregor said. "I think he knew he was going to get beaten ... so he hit the dog first."

In June 2006 Edge underwent emergency surgery after the offender stabbed him in the back with a hunting knife. After surgery and a blood transfusion, the dog made a complete recovery.

Bagley is a council city 200 kilometers south of the capital, Wellington. AP

GONZALEZ: Not his job to probe outright complaints

PUNO: Merely following orders

ANDAMAN: Some ignorance of the law?

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Aplus METRO
Editor Ester G. Diguyuit
Text or fax feedback: inquirer.metro@inquirer.com.ph/metro@inq7.net (Globe) or 291-1244 (Smart) E-mail: p_metro@inquirer.com.ph

Pasig shabu case witness links top cop

Claims drug deliveries, 'red alert' security with police escorts

By Ellen C. Tordesillas Jr.

A FORMER PASIG POLICE CHIEF was implicated in the alleged shabu-for-jueteng operations of a companion's housing clusters engaged in the sale of shabu to the city.

Tomas Pelaez, the police witness who claimed to be the right hand of the alleged owner of the companion, also told the Pasig City Regional Trial Court yesterday that an average of 10 kilos of shabu were delivered to the alleged drug den every week since it began operating in 1993.

He said he and other workers in the compound were put on "red alert" status, which means heightened security, when a delivery was expected.

Pelaez told the court the "red alert" declaration usually came from alleged drug den owner Amin Imam Boratong, his first cousin Mimie and former city police chief Senior Supt. Reid Medina.

Medina denied the allegations when caught for comment.

Pelaez referred to the former police chief, who was relieved of his post following the discovery of the shabu shabu in February 2006, as "Colonel Medina."

Pressed by RTC Branch 154 Judge Abraham Bowers for the official's first name, Pelaez gave the first name of the former official, "Reid."

Pelaez also told the court during direct examination that some members of the city police have served as escorts and guards during alleged shabu deliveries.

"I do not know why they are dragging my name in the issue. I do not know anything about the drug den. I do not even have those people," Medina said in a phone interview yesterday referring to Boratong and Pelaez.

"My conscience is clear. I hope the witness would just tell the truth," Medina told the lawyers.

He said he would consult his lawyers for possible legal remedies to protect his reputation.

Medina had been transferred to the Quezon City Police District.

In his testimony, Pelaez said that as Boratong's right hand man, he personally witnessed deliveries as well as the repacking and distribution of shabu to about 80 "tumatambays," or those who sold drugs stored in the shabu-shabu-converted houses.

Pelaez said he grew up with Boratong's family in Lantik, Bonifacio in Lanao del Sur in right hand man, he said he did whenever Boratong asked him to do.

But, in an earlier interview, Be-

GPASS
A finalist in the Most Innovative Technology Development Category of the GSM Association's
2007 Global Mobile Awards

G-Xchange, Inc. (GXI), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom) was nominated this year for its pioneering G-Pass service, the world's first contactless ticketing solution with a mobile tag. G-Pass lets Globe and TM subscribers wirelessly pay for their MRT3 train fare with just a tap of a wireless Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip.

GXI president Rizza Maniego-Eala welcomed the nomination as a major achievement for the company as it continues to develop even more groundbreaking M-commerce solutions by making money transfers and micro payment transactions more affordable and accessible to a larger public. "GXI is all about making people's lives better through mobile technology. We feel that this nomination for the 2007 Mobile Innovation Awards shows that we are on the right track," she said.

G-Pass is made even more convenient by its integration with GCash, the revolutionary electronic payment system that won Best Messaging Service at the 2005 GSM Awards. The integration of G-Pass with GCash lets subscribers reload their G-Pass chips through their mobile phones anytime and anywhere. Users also get real-time updates via SMS to confirm transactions and to remind them of their outstanding balance.

The six finalists will be presented for judging at the Mobile Innovation Forum in February as part of the 3GSM World Congress, the world's largest annual mobile industry event, which will be held this year in Barcelona, Spain. The prestigious Mobile Innovation Awards is a venue for small, young, and upstart companies to present their ideas to leading industry investors and mobile operators via a high profile international event.

"Mahaba ang pila sa mga booths ng stored value cards. Di katulad ng G-Pass, itatapat mo lang, makakapasok ka na. Para kang naka-red carpet, dire-diretso!"
- Luisiano Ricasana, a G-Pass user.

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Murder case against jail guard now in court

MetroBriefs

No foul play

POLICE ruled out foul play in the case of a 37-year-old woman who was found dead in her friend's house in Mandaluyong City early morning yesterday. Chief Investigator SPO3 Crispin Pe said the body of Elfreda Pardo, born on signs of possible foul play based on their initial investigation. Preliminary found dead inside the house of Arnold Arnan in Barangay Vergara. Police said after the couple had a drinking session, she had visited a friend to get some shots of amount 1:30 a.m. Arnan found her lifeless body two hours later.

Enrique Cinco

Passay kissing tilt

EXPECT heavy traffic along Pasay Boulevard, Diosdado Macapagal Avenue and Edsa going to SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City on Saturday, from 4 p.m. to past midnight for the Chocolate Lovers Festival Kiss Trail. The event is an attempt by the Philippines to receive from Hungary the Guinness World record for the highest number of couples kissing simultaneously. Around 10,000 participants are expected for the event.

Wellness fest

FREE haircuts and chemoradiation on psychic healing, detoxation therapy and beauty care are reasonably priced food supplements and other holistic services will be offered to the public at the Psychic and Holistic Festival carnival fair, 7:30 to 8 at the SM City Mall Building, South Triangle, Quezon City. Filipino psychics Ada Victoria, Brother Sam and Dante Mercado are among the featured lecturers. For inquiries, call the secretariat at tel. no. 371 1978.

FULL LOAD
This rickshaw-tricycle is used by this man-cum-only-her his scrap materials business. It also brings his son to school and his wife to the market.

By Nancy Carvajal

RICARDO JULIATA, THE JAIL GUARD who allegedly shot and killed a suspect in the robbery-slay case of a television camera man, is now detained at the Caloocan City jail for murder, according to a Task Force Usig report.

The task force, headed by Police Deputy Director Avelino Razon, was created by President Macapagal-Arroyo to investigate the killings of militant members and journalists.

'Accidental'

The case for murder against Juliata, who said he "accidentally shot" Ilocano Magnayon, a prime suspect in the murder of Ralph Ramos of DZR 9, is now in the rule of City Regional Trial Court Judge Eleanor Nieves of Branch 120.

The task force report also said a case of obstruction of justice was filed against former Caloocan City jail warden Supt. Estrello Cabang and nine of his subordinates.

Detained

"Contrary to reports, the jail guard is in prison, detained without bail," a source in the police said.

He provided Inquirer a copy of the task force's report.

The judge did not allow Juliata to post bail while waiting for the trial start.

Doubts

Certain sectors, particularly the National Press Club headed by Nay Mabasa, expressed doubts that Juliata had been charged for Magnayon's death.

Juliata, at the time of the shooting, was one of the bodyguards of Interior Undersecretary Ronaldo Puno, but he was allowed to spend the nights in the jail compound.

Published reports said Magnayon was supposedly giving Juliata a message inside the escarda section room of the facility when the shooting occurred.

Block

In charging Cabang, the task force said he "impeded the processing of the arrest of the victim."

The warden refused to allow police investigators to enter the jail compound immediately after the shooting.

Man nabbed for collecting fees for nonexistent jeep franchises

By Margaux C. Ortiz

AN ALLEGED MEMBER OF A paramilitary group was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Quezon City yesterday for allegedly duping at least 20 prospective jeepney operators.

NBI Director Reynaldo Manantan identified the suspect as Ernesto Cristobal, 38, of No. 53 Masagana St., Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

Confirmed from Cristobal was an identification card connecting him with 15 Brigade United Nations Military Philippine Government International Police Commission, which Manantan said became controversial more than a decade ago with the involvement of alleged leader Romulo Padilla.

An investigation conducted by the NBI Counter Intelligence Division (CID) headed by Regino Pelaez showed that on May 5, 2006, Cristobal had introduced himself as an employee of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to Valenzuela residents interested in acquiring jeepney franchises.

Cristobal told his prospective "clients" that for a P45,000 fee, his connections at the LTFRB could provide them with jeepney franchises allowing them to ply certain routes in Valenzuela.

After a series of meetings, Cristobal was able to collect a total of P457,500 from the complainants led by Jean Casanova.

Casanova and the other victims however sought NBI assistance after the latter failed to keep his end of the bargain, according to Pelaez.

Cristobal was arrested at the Land Transportation Office canteen while receiving marked money from the victims.

The suspect, who admitted that he had worked as a "fixer" at the government agency for more than five years, said a colleague had given him the P-Shield identification card in exchange for P150.

Pasay community to get MMDA, DPWH aid for access road

By Jolo M. Revilla

A CHANCE AT A PERMANENT

The Pasay City government is set to discuss the situation of Muslim informal settlers in the city's Reclamation Area following the violent dismantling of a wooden bridge in Barbosa on Jan. 5.

The city government said it would hold a dialogue with the Office on Muslim Affairs to talk about possible options for informal settlers living along the Reclamation Area.

In the past, residents of the Muslim community had clashed with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority's Sidewalk Clearing Operations Unit (SCOU) who had forcibly dismantled the wooden bridge connecting the Muslim residents to the Barbosa area.

Some residents were injured during the violent operation.

Pasay City Mayor Allan Panlilio said that the municipal government has come up with a plan to construct an alternative road connecting the Muslim community to the city proper.

At a press conference yesterday, MMDA and the Department of Public Works and Highways officials agreed that the Pasay city government would demolish the materials for the road's construction.

The local government will also provide the funds for streetlights, lampposts and electricity.

The MMDA, on the other hand, will undertake and oversee the construction of the access road.

An outpost for watchmen will also be put up in the area while another structure will house paramedics in case of emergencies.

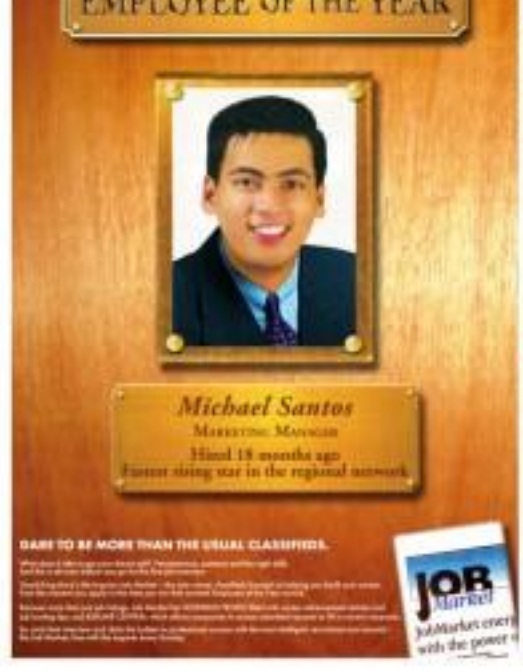
"The aim of the conference between the MMDA and the DPWH is to construct an alternative route so the MM-district jeepneys, along Roxas Boulevard, no incidents can have easy access to Edsa," Panlilio said.

The mayor added that the national government is planning to convert the current Muslim settlement area into an Inter-Modal Terminal for buses and jeepney passengers.

Did you know

ON JUL 2, 1945, American soldiers arrived in Hiroshima to assess a recently-built Superfortress hit from the Japanese Imperial Army, saving it from further damage. In 1996 this milestone in The City's history, local author Dorothy Laurentino of the major events Roses in Pictures.

Cyril Jhon Revilla
Inquirer Research



Pasig shabu case . . .

From page A-9

raising told the heavens it was Palao who owned the drug dens on his lot in Barangay Sto. Tomas.

Palao, who he said was his elder biological brother, just got mad at him because Palao suspected he had reported the alleged drug dens to the police.

Police raid

In an unprecedented police operation last year, the Philippine National Police raided the compound of over 50 shanties, just half a kilometer away from the Eastern Police District Headquarters and the Pasig City Hall, that served as shabu "restaurants."

Clientele

Customers could reportedly order and use shabu by the gram.

More than 300 persons were arrested, while two deputy policemen and officials were relieved of their posts following the operation.

Tearful reunion

Bontaning broke into tears when he saw Palao at the court last week.

"I just miss him. He is still my brother after all. I still love him," Bontaning told reporters in Filipino.

But yesterday, when Palao pointed to him after he was asked to identify who among the people in the gallery was the alleged owner of the shabu compound, Bontaning just looked straight at Palao and nodded several times.

Palao glanced at Bontaning a few times but mainly kept his eyes on the proceedings during the direct examination.

STILL WINTER WEATHER
A cardinal sits in one of the snow-covered limbs of a spruce tree in Glencoe, Ky., Feb. 7

Huge hacker attack slows Internet traffic

WASHINGTON—THE worst attack in years on the Internet's infrastructure slowed traffic but failed to bring down the Web, with industry computer experts around the world used to "cyberhits," security experts said Wednesday.

Private sector analysts said the computers that direct Internet traffic were hit by a so-called denial-of-service attack, which seeks to drow crippled by overwhelming them with bogus requests.

The US Department of Homeland Security said only that its cybersecurity unit had been monitoring "anomalous" activity on the Internet.

"The nature of the traffic has not been confirmed, and the person which are common variants operational," DHS spokesperson Russ Knocke said.

There are no indications of any direct losses in the United States at this time, Also, there is no credible intelligence to suggest an imminent threat to the homeland or our computing systems at this time," Undersecretary Cyber technology consultant at the London-based firm Sophos, said Tuesday's incident "seems to have been the same version attack against three domain name servers" since late 2002.

Cerby said three of the 13 domain name system (DNS) servers that control global Internet traffic were hit with a denial-of-service attack, which means they were bombarded with information requests in an effort to bring them down.

Cerby noted that the attack was coming from PCs taken over by hackers to create combat networks or "botnets" to bombard the servers with traffic.

"These routine computers could have brought the Web to its knees, and while the resilience of the root servers should be commended, more needs to be done to tackle the root of the problem—the lax attitude of some users towards IT security," he said.

He said that since the 2002 attacks, "the system has become more resilient and is well set up to bounce back from these attacks."

AFP

WorldBriefs

Lebanese, Israeli troops exchange fire

AFP/Wed. PM—Lebanese and Israeli troops exchanged fire across the Lebanese border late Wednesday for the first time since the worst fighting last year, causing no injuries. The incident was reported by Israeli troops manning a no-man's-land separating the two countries, a military police officer said. They withdrew early Thursday after completing their mission, the Israeli army said. "Two Lebanese army bunkers and watching posts. We asked them to be cautious and they fired back. Nothing more," the officer said. "We retaliated in the direction of the shots. One bunker had no windows." The Hezbollah-run Manar television station said the incident occurred "at 10:30 a.m. when the Israeli enemy violated the Lebanese border." It added: AFP

US approves first nonprescription diet pill

WASHINGTON—America's ongoing battle against obesity has some weapon—the first government-approved diet pill that can be bought without a prescription. Intended only for people 18 and older, the drug, called alli, is a somewhat weaker version of the prescription diet drug Xenical. The Food and Drug Administration on Wednesday announced its approval of sales of the tablets, which are available in pharmacies and other retail outlets and over the Internet. "Using this drug doesn't suddenly to be beneficial," said Dr. Charles Ganley, FDA's director of nonprescription drug products. The new drug will be sold by GlaxoSmithKline PLC and the company said it is expected to have stores by summer. While the final price has not been determined, it is expected to cost about $1 (US) a day. Reuters is made by Roche Holdings AG.

AP

Nations to start crucial N. Korea talks

BEIJING—Six nation talks aimed at persuading North Korea to stop giving up its nuclear weapons were set to resume here Thursday for what delegates said could be a make-or-break moment in the four years of negotiations. The talks bring North Korea considered to have atomic bomb to back its claims of being a nuclear power, envoys from China, the US, South Korea, Japan and Russia. The meetings will be possibly Washington's most serious attempt to end North Korea's nuclear ambitions through diplomacy. Pyongyang would reconvene for a six-party deal in September 2005, when it agreed to abandon its nuclear program in exchange for aid, energy benefits and security guarantees. The agreement collapsed in December 2006 amid North Korea's protests over sanctions it US sanctions imposed against it for alleged money laundering and counterfeiting.

AP

NYC cabbie returns bag of diamond rings

NEW YORK—The guy has just a 20-months left a New York cabbie $400 headlines Tuesday when a passenger to return 21 diamond rings she'd left behind. "I'm not going to take someone else's money or property, no way, no way," Ghosh insisted that way," said Abbas Hassan Choudhury, also a New Bangladesh. He was more modest, as would the $100 check the passenger offered as a reward, essentially rewarding him more than he was under by trying to locate her.

AP

Officials report 6th helicopter downing in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A helicopter operated by a private security firm crashed in northern Iraq on Thursday, an incident that marks the sixth downing of a helicopter in those roads. Reports of the Jan. 31 incident, in which two crew were killed, came today after various news members and government sources of a US Marine helicopter crash that when it crashed near Baghdad, reportedly after being hit by ground fire. The US military, concerned that militants were disrupting roads or air transport, curtailed road transport. Two said this underlying its decision. As of Jan. 31, 2007, 2,000 helicopters had been officially confirmed to have killed in the Iraq war operations.

Reuters

More rains hit flood-stricken Jakarta

JAKARTA—More heavy rains struck Indonesia's capital on Thursday, hampering clean-up efforts and piling misery for hundreds of thousands of people already reeling from days of flash floods. After the deluge Reuters. However, an official of the Jakarta Flood Crisis center said the latest flooding was less widespread than in the past week. "The main reason the floods subsided is because the heavy rains stopped at about 10:00, the official said, adding that 200,000 still displaced.

Reuters

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FILINVEST

The WORLD

Julie Lorraine B. Sierra

3rd letter bomb in 3 days explodes in Britain, hurts 4

LONDON—A LETTER BOMB EXPLODED AT Britain's drivers' licensing agency on Wednesday, extending what the police deplored as a coordinated series of attacks that has troubled the nation's leaders and inspired comparisons with the Unabomber in the United States.

The blast at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, which slightly injured four people, was the third in three days, nothing sounds or instructions and complaints involved in regulating customers and automobiles.

The licensing agency, located in Swansea in south Wales, collects automobile taxes as well as issuing drivers' licenses. The other targets this week were companies involved with collecting congestion charge fees for cars entering central London and with supplying emissions-control-monitor traffic flows.

Police disclosed Wednesday that four other letter bombs had been sent in January to other businesses, two of them providing financial consulting services to the police, of letter bomb was also sent to the director of an embossing company providing services to a tax collection office in Folkestone, Kent, south of London.

There have been no fatalities or reports of serious injuries.

Police said one of the letter bombs sent last month from the name of Barry Horne, an animal rights activist who died in 2001 while serving an 18-year jail term on arson charges. The Association of Chief Police Officers said the first three letter bombs sent last month were apparently linked, presumably related to animal rights protesters.

Ashton Hobbs Ltd., the chemicals formulation spokesperson for the Association of Chief Police Officers, told a news conference in London that the explosives in the letters had been "of a small pyrotechnic nature" and did not contain conventional explosives.

"The intention seems to be to cause shock and relatively minor injuries," Hobbs said. The police had received no claims of responsibility from any group, he said.

The latest letter bombings were mentioned in Parliament on Wednesday when Prime Minister Tony Blair called the attacks "cowardly" and said the police were investigating "very closely." AFP

War objector's court-martial ends in mistrial

FORT LEWIS, WASH.—A military judge declared a mistrial on Wednesday for the court-martial of a US Army officer who publicly refused to fight in Iraq and criticized the war.

The military judge ruled that First Lt. Ehren Watada had unknowingly signed a document that warranted to a combination of guilt. Watada, 28, had faced up to four years in prison if convicted of one charge of missing movements and two charges of conduct unbecoming an officer for his criticisms of the war.

The mistrial was an unexpected ending to a case that had rallied the antiwar movement in the first known court-martial of a US Army officer for publicly refusing to move to Iraq.

Lt. Col. John Head, the military judge, declared a mistrial after throwing out a "stipulation of fact"—an agreement over certain facts of the trial—that forced the government to request a mistrial instead of immediately arguing its entire case over to prove those facts with new witnesses.

The judge said he could not accept the stipulation, because it amounts to a confession to the missing movements charge when Watada stated he is not guilty.

Watada's lawyer, Eric Seitz, told Reuters the mistrial was a "disastrous" outcome for the government because a retrial would constitute double jeopardy, which forbids a defendant from being tried twice for the same crime.

"There is no way we are going to be the death knell for the greatest march ever," said Seitz, who added that the government does not uphold death since it requested the mistrial.

Lt. Col. Robert Resnick, chief of administrative law at Ft. Lewis, also wonder what double jeopardy had not attached and the government has the legal authority to retry the case.

Reuters

NASA astronaut Lisa Nowak being escorted to her court appearance at an Orlando Corrections facility in Feb. 6 in Orlando, Florida. AP

Love-crazed astronaut returns to Texas

HOUSTON—HEDDING HER BAIL from the vanilla, astronaut Lisa Nowak returned to Texas on Wednesday, a day after being charged in Florida with trying to murder the woman she believed was her romantic rival for a space shuttle pilot's affections.

The astronaut, her head covered by a jacket, was escorted from a plane near a police car waiting on the tarmac.

She looked tiny, looked tired," said John VanDeHaven, a passenger on her flight.

Nowak was charged Tuesday with attempted first-degree murder, attempted kidnapping and first-degree arson, stemming from the police described as a love triangle involving a fellow astronaut.

Police said Nowak, accustomed to rousing astronaut slumber during the space shuttle's launch and return, wore shoes on a 900-mile (1,400-kilometer) drive from Houston to Florida so she would not leave tracks in bathroom stops as she stood to confront Colleen Shipman at the Orlando International Airport. A police affidavit said Nowak, in a wig and trench coat, had "stealthily followed the victim while in disguise and possessed multiple deadly weapons," including a knife and steel mallet.

Bail was ordered on $10,000 or denied to stay away from Shipman and wear a monitoring device.

Nowak underwent a medical assessment Wednesday at the Johnson Space Center, said Brad spokesperson Brook Dunbar. Lounsbury, who would not say whether that included a psychological evaluation. "She's not staying here. She's leaving with her family," Dunbar Lounsbury said.

It was a remarkable downfall for a woman whom life seemed to be on a perfect trajectory until a few months ago. Just weeks ago, friends and her husband separated after 19 years.

Nowak became an astronaut after winning a series of Navy service awards. She had flown on the shuttle Discovery, and was a mother of three children. She said in a September interview with Cedars Home Journal magazine that her husband, Richard, "works in Houston Control, so he's part of the whole space business, too. And support her also."

But there were signs that something was not right in her life.

In a Mass interview last year, before her mission aboard Discovery, she spoke about the strain her career placed on her family. She has twin 5-year-old girls and a teenage son.

"It's a sacrifice for my own personal time and can be justified and the people around us," she said. "But I do think it's worth it because I've don't explore and take risks and go do all these things. Our everything will stay the same."

In Hernando, a neighbor reported hearing the sounds of children being thrown inside Nowak's Brooksville home.

The final unraveling came the week after police warned the wife of Shipman to keep her distance. Nowak showed up at Shipman's door to a parking lot booth for help.

"Weekend is the word that I'm working with," said astronaut Chris Ferguson, who attended Nowak's bull-hearing in Orlando.

Ann Glick, a former Navy flight surgeon who lost his wife, astronaut Laurel Clark, in the Columbia disaster in 2003, told CBS on Richard Clark Nowak supported his family when and he supports her one.

"She was a mother before she was an astronaut. I sense that really was him finally the, motivator's happened in the last few days but just been really a shock. She is a really wonderful, good caring person," he said. "You have to find forgiveness and love in your heart to get her through this."

Many credit to have a strangle psychological and behavior/health support system for shuttle astronauts, Clark said.

"They don't have to have any medication to have an abnormality, and it is only when something catastrophic happens does this ever even come to light," he said.

Police charged Nowak with attempting to murder Shipman based on computers and other items found in Nowak's vehicle at the car, pepper spray a BB gun, a steel mallet, latex and rubber tubing.

"We believe that the items that we found certainly would have caused Colleen Shipman serious bodily injury or death," Orlando Police Sgt. Rudy Jones said. AP

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CHAUFFEUR-DRIVEN SAMANTHA
Samantha, a 3-year-old cat, leans out of a stroller while being rolled through Lora Parker-Cheyenne, Wyo., by her owner, Jackie Bennett, Feb. 7.

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Ginebra-SMB title series on /A24

SPORTS

Editor Tobbie S. Melendres

■ Estrera-Bayron boosts lead to 4 /A24

Hapee makes it; Harbour lives

Bucao lifts Teeth Masters as Gallent's five forges Game 5

By Jasmine W. Paya

HAPEE-PCU NAILED the first PBL championship berth yesterday behind backup guard Ronald Bucao even as Harbour Centre forged a winner-take-all encounter with Toyota Otis tomorrow for the other Silver Cup title slot.

H&L and More's Wyngaine Te (right) battles Hapee-PCU's Ronald Bucao for the loose ball.

The 5-foot-7 Bucao buried nine of his 11 points from beyond the arc to lead the Teeth Masters past third and More, 80-75, in Game 4 of their semifinal duel at the Ortanez College Gym in Cavite.

"He was the surprise package, he made the difference," said coach Jess Reed of Bucao, a standout from the University of the Visayas, who completed his breakout game with a conference-high 12 points and four steals.

The Teeth Masters wrapped up the series at 3-1 even though top gunner Jason Gretz posted a sore single-digit output of eight markers.

But Toyota Otis couldn't share coattails even semifinal series as Harbour Centre vanquished Mr. G, to forge a decisive Game 5.

The Port Masters, who nearly squandered a 75-61 lead, sealed seven of their 13 free throws in the final minutes to pull it out after the Epsilon had threatened at 79-74.

"We had our fourth-quarter 'hot-hour' again, but I think we're much better now," said Harbour Centre coach Jorge Gallent.

Chito Loretti and JC Intal headed the Port Masters to a 23-16 lead and Harbour Centre retained its control until Marlon Cruz sparked a 7-0 run that crunched down the stretch.

The Teeth Masters blew the game wide open with Bucao providing over an early fourth-period surge to 69-53 advantage.

It will be Hapee-PCU's first Finals appearance since winning the crown in the 2004 Fiesta Conference.

"We were already happy making it to the top four, that is already a bonus for us," said Noel.

Beau Belga, who paced Hapee-PCU's balanced charge with 12 points, helped stretch the lead to 77-64 after knocking in four straight points. A Bucao triple finished the Teeth Masters' reign, 80-68, with three minutes left.

The scores:

First Game

HAPEE-PCU 80—Vigodon 12, Belga 12, Bucao 11, Rodriguez 11, Sese 11, Arrogancia 6, Jacinto 6, Garcia 5, Abrera 2, Rom 2, Lumagui, Deal 0

H&L AND MORE 75—Te 19, Gitualan 12, Vito 11, Deal 8, Ta 7, Salmorin 5, Espinosa, Cadawas 2, Del Rosario 0

Quarters: 20-20, 33-32, 58-52, 80-75

Second Game

HARBOUR CENTRE 86—Loretti 17, Intal 16, Capal 15, Santos 9, Fernandez 7, Cortez 6, Arana 4, Sanz 4, Pellicer 3, Pelgone 3, Nieto 2, Raymundo 0, Vergara 0

TOYOTA OTIS 83—Intal 13, Wilkes 13, Dar 11, Uro 10, Cabahug 8, Baldonado 7, Rodriguez 7, Santos 5, Estrada 5, Romero 5, Lubrin 0

Quarters: 20-14, 44-34, 65-61, 86-83

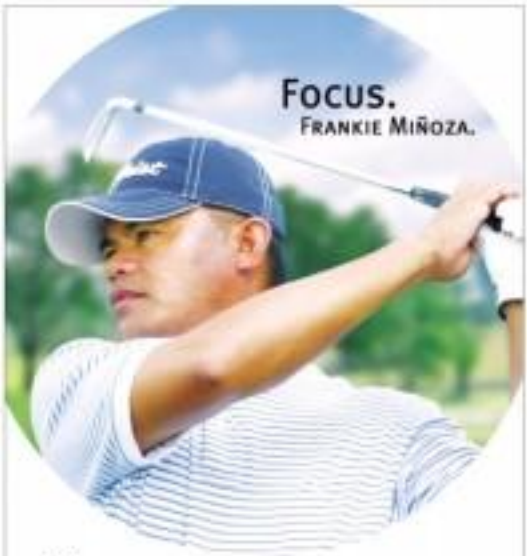
Rosales, Que 4 off with 70s

KUALA LUMPUR—Gerald Rosales sustained his One form by shooting a two-under par 70 this Friday to conquer the golden Que Thursdays to stay four strokes off Ole Anderson of the Maybank Malaysia Open.

Philippine Open champion Frankie Miñoza also kept his place in the upper half of the field with a level par 72 but Jose Pasamba, last year's rookie sensation, struggled with a 75 in the $1.25 million championship jointly sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour.

Rosales, who previously shared seventeenth place with a one-under par 143 at Mont Kiara's East course in Kuala Lumpur behind Sikkimese Jyoti Randhawa, fell victim to the 80 Open, picked up five birdies against two bogeys and is tied for forty-first place with 35-39 top at the Singapore Golf and Country Club course.

Robert Rock of England shot a 66 to take a one-stroke lead over Scotland's Colin Montgomerie on the slate of the event flavored by volatile conditions.



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Estrera-Bayron boosts lead to 4

By Musong R. Cuarillo

SILANG, CAVITE—EDWIN ESTRERA AND Jay Bayron boosted their Kawit Manila National Pro-Am lead to four strokes despite a scrambling seven-over-par 79 yesterday as the Cavite leg opened at the Riviera Golf Club.

Estrera-Bayron had a 212 total, 1-0 over par, in what could go down as the highest scoring edition of this event worked in 2008 by Ulo Golf and CEO Golf Events Bureau.

Conditions at the tough layout continued to upset the huge field, with seven-time Amateur champion Antonio Lascuña and Jaime Bautista Jr. as the notable blow hard all day.

In second spot with 156 aggregate were Boyet Villacorta and Arnold Tagaloc (77), Jaldy Salvador-Bobby Bagtas (76), Elmer Salvador-Lee Yong-hoon (79), and Troy Lascuña-Ji Min-jung (76).

Former world junior champion Carlo Villarosa, whose partner, Stanislaw Ekongsard, is the lady-lady, notey among 204 players in a field of 123 teams, shot an 80 for third spot, just five shots off.

The defending champion team of Gerard Gamuda and Jo Singson continued to struggle, shooting an 81 this time to drop nine strokes behind and virtually down to "bear proof" bid with ten rounds left.

Meanwhile, Mark Fernando, the co-caddy who saved the 1978 pool No. 8 on Wednesday, has decided to donate the winnings to the Philippine Amateur Golf Development Foundation in memory of Tommy Manotoc.

Fernando is training under the National Caddies Open program losing run by the PAGDF.

Four teams were disqualified for declaring wrong handicaps, with South Forest member Alan Chang-hun and Chai Ulyon-jin emerging the biggest casualties.

"It's very clear that the rule disallows a change per se a Filipino pro to the Top 30 of the Order of Merit in part with an amateur having an index handicap of 5 or below," said tournament director Tony Andrada. "They broke the rule, so they were disqualified."

Blue and Chai (handicap 3.8 at Royal Northwoods), who were just a stroke off the leaders after Round 1, were named from the tournament together with Korean Kim Dong-seok and Ko Byung-seok (13.7 handicap at WOMEN). Japanese Yuji Fujio and Cory Nakao (4.6 of Villamor) and Filipino Edwin Sanchez and Korean Lee Shin-ho (4.0 at Eagle Ridge).

JAY Bayron (left) provides the body weight as partner Edwin Estrera swells a putt at No. 18.

Ginebra-SMB title series on

Menk rejoining Kings

SAN Miguel Beer's Danny Ildefonso (right) grabs the jersey of teammate Danny Seigle for balance as he tries to block Red Bull's Rico Villanueva in their Game 7 showdown Wednesday.

Conditional POC approval for new basketball group

By Jane Nazaro

THE BASKETBALL BALLERS of Filipinos will get nothing more than a conditional recognition from the cagebal basketball body under the dominance of the Philippine Olympic Committee soon.

It sounded like another yang to the cow organizations had to get the ban, imposed by the international Basketball Federation (Fiba), lifted but the local Olympic body has no reasons but to follow the rules.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr explained that, in normal practice, sports associations must be affiliated with the international federation before obtaining membership from the national Olympic committee.

"Usually, the approval of the international federation comes first before the recognition of the POC," said Cojuangco, who is the first one of which comes first, the chicken or the egg?"

"Thus, the POC will give the accreditation on a conditional basis, subject to the approval of the Fiba."

Cojuangco said that the moment the new federation for basketball puts the seal of the Fiba, the POC will then move to endorse the SBP-MBP as a regular national sports association.

The POC has scheduled a special general assembly on Feb. 15 to tackle the matter.

Meanwhile, PBA commissioner Noli Eala said he had no immediate comment on the ouster of Jose Emmanuel "Manny" Calvo as president of the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA).

"He is best suited to the position," said Eala, who has consistently turned out as a candidate for the post. "But I leave yet to talk to him."

Sources said there being considered to the position were former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino, PBL representative Chino Trinidad, PLDT executive Al Panlilio, POC vice-chairman Joey Romasanta, former BAP spokesperson Peter Cayton and former Philippine Basketball president Bonnie Serrano.

SOUTHERN LADIES

Korean Shin pulls away by 4 points

ILOILO—MISS MONTE MARIA may Crystal Shin continued to shine in the Southern Ladies golf tournament, firing 69 points yesterday to put her overnight lead to four over Inna Tagbuco and Dorie Andrade after two rounds at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club here.

Shin, the defending individual champion who opened with 32 points under the Midsea scoring system Wednesday, pulled away despite a five-over-par 77 in windy play.

The 15-year-old South Korean shotmaker had a 161 total, four points up on Avelina, the reigning Junior World champion, and Tagbuco.

Avelina struggled with a seven-over 77 worth 47 points while Tagbuco, who with Carmelene Villanueva started the round just one point behind Shin, could only score 46 points on a 78 in stroke play.

Mia Pineda, a member of the ICTSI-backed national training pool, also had 46 points for 95 to share fifth with another Lhi Mann Int, Lovelyn Galagate, who shot a 76 worth 48 points.

Meanwhile, Iloilo's RCCI-Legend ruled the two-day standings with a 308 total after closing out with 169 points under the Stableford scoring format.

Christine Hyap led the charge with 35 while Maggie Flores and Mai Zaragoza turned in 33 and 32, respectively. Helen Hernandez (27) also helped.

RCCI-III, honored by Miss Iloilo Orol, Sofia Gonzalez (31) and Lesy Lizera (32), finished second with 294, while the Arabesque NEAP/CTSU I settled for third place with 194.

Carmen Gatin closed out with 36 points to collect the senior crown with 72. Mailee Flores (36) and Marjan Kogan (29) tied for second with 60.

RP Cuppers favored over Pakistanis

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MEMBERS of the AP squad (from left) Lorenzo Arcilla, Patrick John Flores, Eric Talino and Cecil Mak hold a replica of the Dave Cup with Pakistan's starting lineup at left Yasir Khan, Asim Sharib, Jahid Khan and Aqeel Khan.

THE HOMETOWN CROWD, THE last hurdlemen of the Blind Memorial Stadium track and field oval will be the first to see whether Philippines plays host to Pakistan starting today in their Asia Oceania Group II Davis Cup tie.

"We are doing good and we're feeling fine," said Mamit, who will start opposing lineups with Indian Fil-Am Eric Talino in the three-day showdown. "We are confident we can win this tie and hopefully move up in Group I again."

The 30-year-old Mamit, who captured a bronze medal in singles competition in the Asian Games with Talino in the last edition, faces Pakistan's No. 2 player Jalil Khan at 10 a.m.

Talino, the country's No. 2 will take on top Pakistani player Aqeel Khan in the other singles match.

RJ Flores and Johnny Arcilla will see action in the doubles tomorrow against the youngest of the Khan brothers, Yasir, and Asim Shafik.

Pakistan's manager Oldham Ahmad has promised an "interesting" tie, although he acknowledged his team's handicaps.

"We have the home-town advantage but we are prepared to fight to the end," said Riaz at yesterday's draws held at the Sheraton Hotel and officiated by International Davis Cup Federation referee Clare Shu.

Pakistan is playing minus its injured top foot, Aisam-Ul-Haq.

Riaz said they don't often play on hard courts back home and are used to playing on grass.

Philippines is not relegated to Group II last year after losing three ties, while the Philippines came all the way from lowly Group III.

"Let's have a excellent tennis this weekend," said Philippine Lawn Tennis Association president Roy Tinsay during the draw, after-attended by former Philippine Manuel Misa and Philippine Olympic Committee Sec-Gen president, Rep. Monico Puentevella.

Madrigal rules Rotax race

THE YOUNGSTER ALSO TOP the highest

Struggling all the effects of a flu-stricken break from eating, 11-year-old Alessandra Madrigal rated the events Asian Single Mix Challenge Philippines team-up race held at Camarena Circuit Philippines in Cavite.

Madrigal, dubbed the Philippines' karting Princess, hauled formidable rivals, including two-time Karter of the Year Marco Caddelli, European Champion powerful veterans Mark Bumgarner and Stefano Mariotti and her former trainer Albert Ly.

The plucky youngster proved her mettle in the final heat wherein she started the 20-lap race in fifth place, behind pole-sitter Ly, Caddelli, Daniel Clesh and Mariotti. The 11 drivers rounded the first turn in a bunch, but at the end of the first lap, the field settled into a bumper-to-bumper line of karts.

Madrigal soon managed to overtake Ly, who was bounded by a fast-

TOP PRIZE: Winner Alessandra Madrigal (center) with (from left) Mark Bumgarner, Marcus Goldcrift, Allen Ly and Daniel Clesh.

tering machine, in the fourth lap. There Lupe knew she enjoyed by Clesh and fired up behind Alessandra for the lucrative runner-up spot, which she was chasing Ly.

In lap 18, Caddelli, realizing that Madrigal was pulling more wins on the main straight, allowed her to come ahead.

With one lap to go, Madrigal was in full control of the race.

Madrigal eventually clocked 443.00 seconds—the fastest lap of the race—and bagged a U.S. second campaign at the checkered flag for the delight of her mentor, former world karting champion Tony Fullerton.

Caddelli took second place with Ly coming in third. Bumgarner was fourth, followed by Clesh, Paulo Belen, Anthony Fernando, Ian Sandoval and Oliver Aquino. —Ely Lustosa

SPORTSWATCH

Manny among Makati Int'l Derby finalists

FACE-OFF

THE DECISIVE 4-CODE CHAMPIONSHIP OF the Makati International 4-Cock Game Derby gets going at 4 p.m. today at the Makati Coliseum with 128 fights on tap. Only the participants are regular battle-cocks but some hard-core fans of Sabong International have been allowed to join the competition. Derby Ltd. Vietnam's Gordon Ng Ngay (Oriental Delang), Saipan's Anthony Manalo (AJ MC) PSI, William Co (Sunrise Coast) Jay Robin (Thai), Sen. Loren Legarda (KTL) and Don Ca. of Davao (DGC) clash by with retired 3rd points each. Scoring here's Money Equivalent (Super Fourteen) converted to contention with a 2-1 draft. In the with Blue Boy and Jaworski Kata Sampaguita (Sabong world), American Greg Navarro (Four Winds), Raymond Yalapo (Area Alabang), Mathematics Richard Rudy and Dean Garden (Rancho Grande), ace Squares (Philippine Sabong), Jose Abel Ramos and Gregorio Araneta Duque Dyaks and Tim Ki, Phil Estrellado (PT Sta. Cruz), Ellerick Julian Filipe Boy (MTU), Lizon Cua (LCC Electric) and Bobb Sabong (Gen Santos), among others.

Pit Games features Candelaria champs

THE CHAMPIONS (RD. 2) | PW-KTS-KBS-GRICE-AGAW-WEIGHTAKONG. 1-Cocal Derby of Dr. Cecilio Cockpit and Resort, will be featured in the upcoming edition of Pit Games and Lizmate magazine. The Games Inc. president Manny Barbosa, nephew of the late national sweepstakes race Bobby Barbosa, said that cockers and breeders may also visit www.pitgames-online.com. Headed by talkmaster owner Chito Roxas, the cockfest drew 150 entries, with the emerging as an entrance with 6-7 derby match. They were Sabong Matalino Jr., Bonjo Arroz, Tony King and Percy Marte, Boy Tirol Esp., Oscar Bautista and Jorge Torres, Ted Reyes, Wayne V. Alonzo, Kris Mercancillo, Rose Gonzalez and Billie Guarnesa and Jason Ferrer.

Ammonet, Mulligan seek vacant WBO titles today

MULIG, SOUTH KOREA—GENE MERRICK AND MARK JASON MULLIGAN WILL FIGHT to become South Korean supremacy today for vacant WBO titles Pacific titles. WBO vice president for Asia Pacific Lian Paterchi announced that Merrick will defend his WBO Asia Pacific supremacy belt against Mulligan in a 10-round bout. Mulligan gave up against Chung Dae in the 10 round bout. voted for the junior welterweight title. In the co-feature, Tagbilaran's foremost battles Kim Young-sung for the lightweight crown. Ammonet, 25, has undefeated record

Heat rise as Celtics sink

BOSTON—THE BOSTON CELTICS suffered a franchise record 45th straight loss with a 91-79 home defeat to the defending NBA champions Miami Heat on Wednesday.

The Heat continued their good run of form with a 40th straight victory and moved within one win of the 2001 mark (24-25) with Dwyane Wade's game-by-game against a woeful Celtics team.

Jermaine O'Neal led Celtics scorers with 22 points and 10 rebounds but the veteran was sent home from the club's second road trip before he could make his comeback appearance with a swollen elbow.

He is now expected to return mid-after the All-Star Game on Feb. 18.

The Celtics would have sunk him on Wednesday, although they did lead by as many as 22 points in the first quarter before a 19-2 run put the Heat ahead for good.

Dwyane Wade had 28 points and nine assists to lead Miami, who are thriving once again since Shaquille O'Neal's return to the line-up from his injury.

O'Neal played just 25 minutes as he continues to receive from knee surgery, but he contributed nine points in the first quarter to within a mere 5 points of the Celtics' 1-5.

Ernie Rogers scored 19 and Udonis Haslem added nine points and 14 rebounds for the winners.

Al Jefferson had 21 points and 14 rebounds for Boston, which has not won since beating Memphis on Dec. 5.

Tyldraun Ratcliff had 26 points and a season-high 26 rebounds to lead the Cleveland Cavaliers past the Los Angeles Clippers, 94-77. LeBron James had just 11 points for the Cavs, three points off his season low.

Andre Iguodala scored 27 points as the Philadelphia 76ers continued their winning ways since dealing Allen Iverson, beating the Charlotte Bobcats, 92-83.

Rookie Andre Iguodala hit the winning basket with 23 seconds remaining and Kyle Korver scored 22 points as the Eastern Conference topped the Indiana Pacers, 110-102.

Chris Bosh scored to 41 points as the Atlantic Division leading Toronto Raptors beat the Orlando Magic, 115-93.

—Reuters

WATCH the Los Angeles Lakers vs. Detroit Pistons "live" on Star Sports at 9 a.m. rebroadcast at 10 p.m.

MAJOR PULLET Bea Pascasio serves a spike during the Perma Ludio Basalt Volleyball at the Greenwich Country Club in Clark Air Base, Pampanga, yesterday. Pascasio and her partner Mela Quiapio, among the favorites, beat the Del Izquela Camilla Abesamis tandem, 15-6.

Tyson checks into rehabilitation program

CHICAGO — BIKE Tyson has blasted himself into counter-intelligence quest for "various additives" while awaiting trial on drug charges, his lawyer said on Wednesday. "He need not legal worked in something that would heighten with his addiction," attorney David Chernoff said. Chernoff would't identify Tyson's substance, but earlier said the former heavyweight champion had effectively hit rock-cocaine bottom.

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PAL INTERCLUB

Pueblo, Del Monte all set for twin event

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE PHILIPpine Airlines Interclub championship joins the busy golf schedule this month with the holding of its 40th anniversary tournament and 20th senior competition at the Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club here and at the Del Monte Golf and Country Club in Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon.

The senior tournament for players 55 and above will be held Feb. 14 to 15 while the regular event will follow on Feb. 21-24.

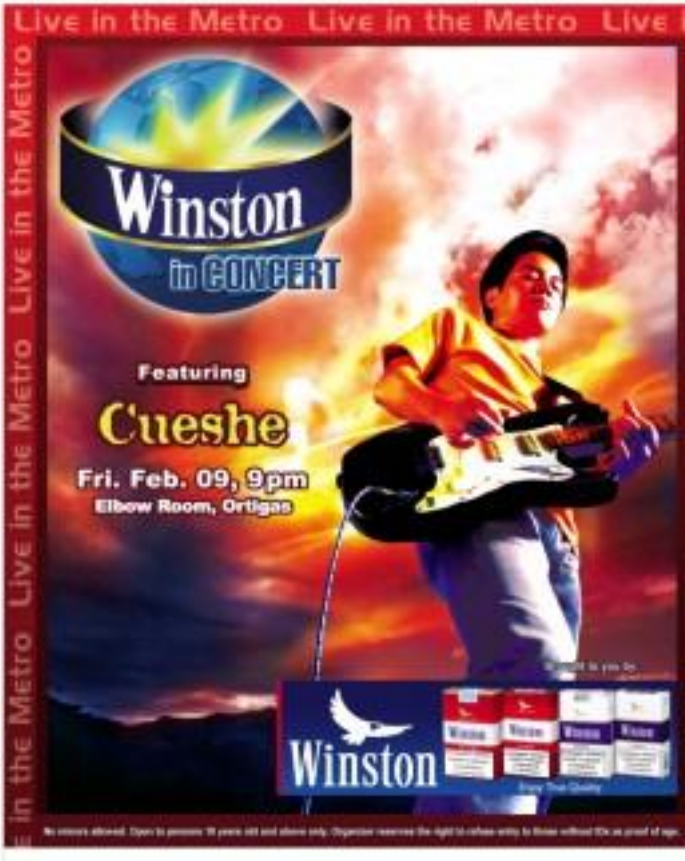
Confirming to defending champion in both divisions.

Bukidnon Gov. Jose Ma. R. Zubiri, Manolo Fortich Mayor Socrates Acosta, Del Monte Phils. (DMPhil) COO Luis T. Alejandro, Pueblo de Oro Development Corp. vice president-Golf Rodolfo Moreno, PAL president Jaime Bautista and PAL Interclub Head Domingo Guevara will do the honorary ceremonial drives in the tournament.

Being the hosts to the event's foursomes are Rey Garduenia, Jurado, Court of Appeals; Ric Hilabrazo, Justice Rodolfo U. Cruz, Jr., Del Monte Phils. executive/GM Rosario T. Lee, Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry immediate past president Ruben T. Wapilonia and Guevara.

Sponsoring this year's competition are Airlift Asia, Airlink Boeing, Bridgestone, Callaway Golf, URLI, Grameen GR Asia-vine, GEOS, Mirano Drugs Asia and Royal Caribbean are its major backers.

www.inquirer.net/sports



KOTR kicks off in Baguio Sunday

THE ANNUAL ADMAS RING OF THE ROAD, the country's premier 10K foot race, hits the road once starting this Sunday at the Burnham Park in Baguio City.

Local race organizer Jun Amoit of Athletes Haven said about 1,500 runners are expected to compete and defy the cutover cold spell in the country's summer capital.

Baguio Mayor Peter Rey Bautista, who has been named to the starting gun, will get the race.

The runners will receive dry-pass from Jose Stephen, Adidas managing director; Goody Cojuangco, sports marketing manager, and Odilon Albarracin, marketing and communications manager.

Members of the national athletic pool in Baguio, headed by Eduardo Buenavista, Isidro Villanueva and Mercedes Manipol is the dazzle talk, are favored to win the women's purse of P10,000.

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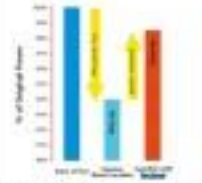
Fourth, Caltex with Techron® delivers smooth performance. Every Caltex with Techron® ensures that the car's fuel system will deliver optimum and enhanced drivability. This translates to a car being more responsive and snappy compared to a car choked up with deposits.



Finally, using Caltex with Techron® enhances a car's reliability. To test this, Caltex partnered with the San Diego Yellow Cab Company in an extensive field test which logged over 1.92 million kilometers to show the improved performance of cars thanks to the unbeatable cleaning power of Techron®.

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IMF sees 5.8% economic growth for RP

Reforms to trigger faster expansion in medium-term

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND SEES THE Philippine economy expanding by 5.8 percent this year and moving to an even higher growth path in the years ahead if the government could sustain its favorable economic reform momentum.

In a briefing yesterday on the IMF's 2006 review of the Philippines, IMF country representative Reza Baqir said the fund's growth projection for this year was even higher than the consensus forecast of 5.5 percent among private analysts. It was also higher than the 5.4 percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) posted by the country in 2006.

GDP, the single most important indicator of economic performance, refers to the amount of goods and services produced by the domestic economy in a

>>B2

IN THIS ISSUE

Jinchuan woos RP mining firm /B4

RP-China trade up 17.5% /B8

Vehicle sales down 2.9%

By Rainier W. Dominguez

MOTOR VEHICLE ASSEMBLERS YESTERDAY reported a 2.9-percent decline in January sales at 7,521 units but expressed confidence that demand would pick up in the following months particularly with the upcoming elections.

According to the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (Camap) and the Truck Manufacturers Association, last month's performance was seasonal and was expected since especially coming off of the extremely high sales month of December.

"For the year 2007, we expect the positive effect of the strict implementation of the privatization on used car imports coupled with the natural strength of the peso against both the dollar and the yen," the groups said.

Camap and TMA said that in January passenger car sales slid 28.4 percent to 3,322 units from 3,113 units a year ago.

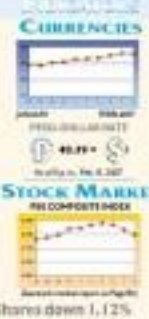
However, sales of commercial vehicles—motor utility vehicles, light commercial vehicles, light trucks, and trucks and buses—went up by 42.3 percent to 4,199 units from 4,029 units.

All commercial vehicle subcategories showed improvement with sales of AUVs going up 9.6 percent to 2,178 units; light commercial vehicles (consisting of pickups, vans, compact sport utility vehicles) by 13.5 percent to 1,304 units; light trucks by 17.3 percent to 549 units; and of trucks and buses by 78 percent to 68 units.

In terms of total sales, Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. kept up the lead with 40 percent of the market. It sold 3,013 units or an increase of 9.9 percent.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. pulled in a second place with 13.9 percent of the market despite a 1.9-percent drop in sales to 1,047 units.

Honda Cars Philippines Inc. was third with 11.3 percent of the market with sales reaching 850 units or 6.7 percent lower.



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DOF finds perks in Tourism Act too generous

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE SENATE TENTATIVELY PASSED the bill aims to boost the country's chances of becoming a prime tourist destination.

The Department of Finance, however, warned against the measure's repercussions on the country already impacting fiscal condition.

Senate Bill No. 2336, called the Tourism Act of 2007, seeks to provide generous tax perks to a wide array of businesses that provide services to tourists. The bill is aimed at luring more foreign visitors to the Philippines and enable the industry to generate more jobs.

However, the DOF said the fiscal incentives that would be made available for some businesses would erode the government's revenue position and might result in huge budget deficits.

"The proposed tax incentives in the bill are too generous. The proposed bill violates the cost-efficiency

Measure seen to result in widening budget gap

rate to the Philippines and enable the industry to generate more jobs.

However, the DOF said the fiscal incentives that would be made available for some businesses would erode the government's revenue position and might result in huge budget deficits.

"The proposed tax incentives in the bill are too generous. The proposed bill violates the cost-efficiency

of the existing fiscal incentives system and needs to huge revenue losses," the DOF said in a position paper submitted to the Senate.

The bill, authored by Sen. Richard Gordon, provides for the creation of the Tourism Enterprise Zone Authority (Teza) to oversee "tourism zones" and administer the granting of taxes, duties incentives.

Businesses outside Metro metro might also be granted incentives upon the approval of the Department of Tourism (DOT).

Incentives include income tax holiday of up to 12 years, 5-percent gross income tax in replace all other taxes except on real estate, exemption from taxes and duties on imported capital equipment and selected imported goods, and tax credit equivalent to all national taxes paid on locally sourced goods and services a registered business and is to operations, among others.

Businesses within the tourism zones and those accredited by the DOT will be given these incentives.

Businesses eligible for these perks include those engaged in travel and tour services, hotel, and other restaurants, recreation, amusement, economic and exhibition organizers, tourist estate management services, adventure sports ventures, sports and recreational centers, spas, museums, galleries, and theme parks. Duty restaurants, clubs and department stores will be able to avail themselves of the incentives.

The BOP said the incentives would lead to revenues losses even bigger than the current losses given monetary savings from the perks granted by the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in tax-related businesses.

Exporters line up for funds

By Russell W. Domingo

THE NEED TO BE leaner the country's export performance was made evident as exporters scrambled to get a share of the P2B-million Export Development Council's efforts.

Philexport said EDC and other agencies that had applied to pool resources to help exporters beat their growth necessitates a reengineering process.

Philexport said a total of 32 requests were received through its offices and have been endorsed for consideration by EDC.

Of the total, 21 came from industry groups while seven were from the Department of Trade and Industry's international trade agencies.

Some of the requests were bill libraries proposals, complete with project details and budgets, while others were statements of intention to seek funding for programs and projects this year, Philexport said.

The fund is intended to help increase the exposure of Philippine exporting enterprises to international markets through participation in foreign trade fairs, trade missions, inward and outward buyer missions, feasibility studies, market promotion projects, especially those that seek to open or expand markets in Africa.

Philexport explained that the fund was an offshoot of an unprecedented power of P13 million that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas put up to 2006 aimed at helping exporters, whose businesses were affected by the appreciation of the peso.

Good intentions

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

THE ROAD TO HELL IS PAVED with good intentions. Evidently, namely as it business failure. We cannot let this happen to jatropha.

The government corporate outlook subject has been tremendous. Runs for our Agriculture because Pelham that wrote "four times volunteering his support.

Jatropha a winner

And why not? Jatropha has all the makings of a resounding success. As a raw material source for biofuel, it will reduce our import dependence and save us foreign exchange. It will help preserve our environment and provide hope for one of the largest sectors in the Philippines which is also one of the poorest – the coconut industry and its 25,000 farmers and workers.

To make a significant dent in our economy growing jatropha must not be left to chance. The globally competitive and efficient scale for new jatropha methods is 2,000 hectares. It would be unfair choosing plant to provide the market and an unfair money to supply quality raw materials.

Funding

Let us learn from Malaysia's national initiative on palm oil. Today, Malaysia is the world market leader in that area, but this did not happen by chance. Government funding combined with political will was necessary.

In the Philippines, the time for jatropha has come. The current economic mess hasten access to portion of the huge coconut levy funds. These can be tapped for funding to interest farmers who wish to plant jatropha in hectares.

Philexport was to have been the national coordinator on a national scale by the Coconut Industry and Investment Fund (CIIF), the steward of a large part of the coconut levy funds.

Competent management

But funding is not enough. For coconut year these money at a project and aspect of the need. This is the end time of many well intentioned fund-raising projects, which usually have a repayment rate of less than 10 percent.

Competent management to likewise necessary. Managing a 2,000-ha jatropha available for

COMMENTARY

agro-industrial agro-industrial agro with good track record. Having well intentioned but inexperienced managers add costly distance.

Finally, government (all) aims to succeed would also be a disaster. The government service knows its unfortunately limitations. It should "steer" and not "row."

Thus the CIIF management should strive by providing barriers the guidelines for the jatropha subsystem. Using these guidelines, the business people will then work to convert its raw into and run the jatropha enterprise.

Controlling the enterprise

Finally, the CIIF management must be very vigilant not to control the enterprises in a way that the status objectives of going to the coconut farmers is better like is achieved. In previous research that I have done in the Philippines, I have documented that the author project is needed to help reassign the individual small enterprises to achieve the necessary economies of scale.

But since the author naturally controls the entire project because of the dependence of the small enterprises on it, the small enterprises should control the author, instead of the author controlling them. But to make this possible, the enterprises must eventually own the author.

The CIIF should therefore provide a scheme where the small enterprises should have the majority ownership of the author after a transition period. Through the current farmers themselves cannot run the author because of their lack of business experience, they can determine the terms of the liquidation of profits and benefits. This way they will be able

(MORE B3)

Retirement fund bill OKd

THE PERSONAL EQUITY RETIREMENT ACcount (Pera) bill, which provides for a flexible and sustainable retirement plan for Filipino workers, was approved in the Senate on first and final reading last Wednesday.

Sen. Miguelito Arapiz, chair of the Senate committee on banks and financial institutions, said Pera would encourage long-term savings and provide tax incentives to the already overwhelmed publicly funded retirement scheme under the Social Security System and the Government Service Insurance System.

"Filipino workers generally lack a retirement-wide apprehension as it translates to a loss of income and the lack of retirement benefits. The presence of a dependable retirement plan could make retirement a source of non-salary rather than contract," said Arapiz.

"Sobe, for instance, the experience of overseas Filipino workers who make a huge contribution to our economy. Their remittances provide for their families' present expenses, but but leave very little savings for their retirement," he continued.

Under the scheme, an individual can make a voluntary annual contribution of P50,000 to his Pera account. The contribution will be given an income tax credit equivalent to 5 percent of the annual Pera contribution.

The accumulated amount can be withdrawn when the contributor reaches the age of 65.

IMF sees 5.8% ...

From page B1

given period.

However, Buiz said it would be important to continue efforts toward the government's goal of balancing the budget while taking priority spending parts already on infrastructure. He added that the low inflation rate was one factor must be maintained and other reforms pursued to improve the investment climate and lessen the cost of doing business.

Real and dynamic growth "could be higher or now the medium term on the back of additional reforms that put public debt on a more sustainable footing, crowd in and boost investor confidence and investment."

He stressed that the Philippines faced many issues not to its having low expenditure-class ratios to revenues.

BSP forex swaps hit $6B in '06

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas' foreign currency swaps hit an all-time high of $6 billion as of end-2006, as it intensified the use of this tool to mop up liquidity.

BSP documents showed that its net standing position in forwards and futures in foreign currencies against the peso reached $6.06 billion as of Dec. 31, 2006 up from the $881 million in the previous year.

Swaps imply a principal sum. The transaction is a spot sale of a currency for another currency, the principal amount is to be swapped at a predetermined exchange rate so that the parties can tap each their original currencies.

A forward contract is an agreement between two parties to buy or sell an asset at a pre-agreed future point in time while a futures contract is a contract to buy or sell a standardized quantity of commodity or financial instrument at a specified price with delivery set at a specified date in the future.

In his view, the BSP uses the currency swaps to mop up the additional liquidity created by the strong foreign inflows. If swaps the foreign currencies, to prevent the equivalent peso from pouring into the open market, effectively depleting the conversion of foreign inflows into the local currency.

Without these currency swaps, the official stated that the country's gross international reserves would be higher by $6 billion.

The country's GIR build-up hit a new high of $22.176 billion as of end-January on strong foreign inflows from the government's recent $1 billion global bond foray. This was $796 million higher than the end-December level of $21.67 billion and was equivalent to 6.2 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity.

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Managed Fund - Peso	1.07249	1.067705
Growth Fund - Peso	1.173062	1.171877
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0067	1.0056

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	NAVPU Values as of
	Feb. 1, 2007
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Balanced Fund	1.3971555
Equity Fund	1.4371333

Sucat plant may be put back into operation

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. (PSALM) is considering the decommissioned Mirant-Sucat Steam Thermal Power Plant as a fallback power generating in case no new capacity will be installed in the Luzon grid prior to the reported 'critical period' in 2010.

PSALM vice president for asset management Froilan Tampinco said the agency had yet to schedule the plant for privatization, so it could be put back into operation in case there would be a shortfall in supply in the next few years.

"We're still treating it as a fallback in case of supply tightness and if there's no additional supply coming in. There should be a decision on what to do with Sucat within the year," he said.

He said the decision should be made as soon as possible so that the generation period required to put back this operational, a decommissioned plant back to be taken into consideration.

The operation but P60M could take, he said, was to bid out the facility, with the condition that the winning bidder should operate two units of the plant.

The new owners of the plant could also opt to put up a new unit, he said. This would serve as additional capacity for the Luzon grid. Concerning the Sucat plant, he said, was also an option but this would be very costly to do.

The Sucat plant was put also for the auction bid for PSALC Deplomation Corp.'s 4300-million Bataan-1 natural gas pipeline project, which would enable members of the industrial, commercial, transport and residential sectors to tap the natural gas from the Malampaya Deep Water Gas to Power Project in Palawan.

Another potential source of additional capacity would be the 600-MW Limay combined cycle plant in Bataan, also a natural gas facility.

If it would be converted to gas, he said, the new owners would have to put up around 400 MW in additional capacity that the plant lacks.

"For a gas-fired power plant to be feasible, it should be generating at least 1,000 MW of power," he said.

Good intentions

From page B1

to get the bulk of the benefits.

Conclusion

Everybody wants lessons and business success but good intentions are simply not enough. It will require wisdom, skill, competence and an ambitious project eventually owned and controlled by the small farmers for the jatropha project to fulfill its promise of alcohol fills.

The CDF management holds the key to jatropha's success or failure in coconut farms. It is hoped that CDF always keeps in mind that its function is to assist and not to own. We hope to arrange a free open dialogue with CDF in March to discuss these matters more thoroughly. If CDF combines their good intentions with small farmers' assisted wise jatropha anchor project, the coconut farmers will experience the business income that will bring a much better income than current dreary and difficult lives.

(The author is agrimarch chair. For inquiries and suggestions, email agrimarchphil @ yahoo.com or telephone (02) 8522110.

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Jinchuan woos RP mining firm

BIR to check firms renting out property

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE is set to conduct nationwide "tax mapping" operations on firms and individuals engaged in the business of rental and lease of real estate properties.

Tax mapping is an audit strategy where revenue personnel are sent to the business site to check on the taxpayers concerned. The procedure includes verification of business licenses and books of accounts.

Bill Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag issued Memorandum Circular No. 10-2007, instructing all revenue directors to focus their auditing efforts on the real estate sector to plug possible tax leaks.

Buñag said the tax mapping operations would cover businesses engaged in the rental and lease of brick, houses and lots, warehouses, establishments used for commercial and business undertakings, subdivisions, townhouses, apartments, condominium units, dormitories, boarding houses, and the like.

Bureau personnel reviewing personnel to verify the accuracy of the income declared by individuals engaged in the rental and leasing business. Regional directors of the BIR have also been tasked to submit a monthly report on the results of tax mapping, such as list of names that are recommended for investigation.

"Be more to focus audit on individuals engaged in the rental and leasing business not brought on by the growing real estate industry, which is said to have made a tax mammal from the ashes of the late 1990s.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier said the 5.4-percent economic growth last year was partly due to the significant rise in income by the real estate sector.

Home Guaranty Corp., which provides guaranty to housing loans extended by financial institutions to credit applicants, earlier reported that its outstanding guaranty to housing loans reached an all-time high of P63.2 billion as of end-2006 due to the rise in demand for housing.

In undertaking the audit, the BIR hopes to boost revenue collection. The national government set the BIR's tax collection target this year at P792.9 billion.

The agency is hard pressed to meet its collection target for 2007. The BIR's collection of P632.8 billion last year fell below its official target of P675.4 billion.

Higher than-programmed collection of non-tax revenue, most of which were proceeds from the sale of state-owned assets, compensated for the BIR's shortfall in 2006.

After failure of Nonoc talks, China mining giant turns to GeoGrace's nickel resources

By Dazzle L. Lucas

LISTED FROM OBSCURE BEGINNINGS Philippines Inc. is negotiating with Chinese mining giant Jinchuan Nonferrous Metals Corp. for a joint venture deal over the former's nickel mining assets.

According to company sources, the Chinese firm's interest in GeoGrace's nickel mining rights began in earnest after talks with Philippine Industrial Corp. over the $1-billion Nonoc mines rehabilitation deal collapsed last month.

The sources, who requested anonymity, said that Jinchuan has expressed interest not only in buying the output of GeoGrace's mines but also in taking an equity position in the firm.

Speaking to the investors in an interview, GeoGrace president David dela Cruz declined to comment on negotiations with Jinchuan, noting that the Chinese firm may have its own confidentiality requirements.

He did confirm, however, that GeoGrace is "engaged in discussions" with potential investors and partners for its nickel mining operations.

At the same time, Dela Cruz said that the firm is contemplating a capital raising exercise to fund its mining needs now that the company's share price has risen above its par value of P1 per share.

"As you know, we can only do capital raising [activities] above par," he said. "We would about the possibility of unlock rights offer that the company had earlier proposed."

"That's one of the things we're looking at now."

GeoGrace plans to raise at least $10 million to fund the development of its nickel assets in Zambales and Palawan.

Dela Cruz said the company's recent moves to acquire the mining rights of Superdike and Cantembler Mining are part of its desire to consolidate its assets under a single firm.

Superdike and Cantembler are owned by stockbroker Jerry Angeles, who is also GeoGrace's chairman.

Company sources said mugging is now in China but talks with potential mining partners, including Jinchuan, which is the second largest Chinese mining group.

"The Chinese are gobbling up all the nickel," Dela Cruz said. "There it a nickel rush going on."

He pointed out that nickel prices are hovering near the $40,000 per tonne-can level on the world market, partly because of the strong demand from China for the metal, which is the main element in the production of stainless steel.

Last week, GeoGrace acquired 6,720 thousand of nickel property in Palawan, adding it to the 12,957-hectare property of Cantembler, and the 5,930 hectare mining concession of Superdike, both in Zambales.

GeoGrace's share price ended the trading session at P1.02 apiece on the stock exchange, from the previous day's close of P0.95 per share, with P279.3 million worth of shares changing hands.

SMIC to hike capital, expand 2 supermarket subsidiaries

PUBLICLY LISTED SM INVESTMENTS Corp. (SMIC) unveiled a plan to raise the capitalization of its two supermarket subsidiaries as part of their expansion program.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, the ninety 56-controlled firm said it would subscribe to "an issue 25 percent" of the increase to the authorized capital stock of Super Value Inc. and Taipei Shopping Market Inc.

SMIC will pump in P300 million into Supervalue, raising its capital from P200 million to P500 million.

The company will also inject P150 million into Super Shopping Market, to raise its capitalization from P100 million to P300 million.

SMIC acquired both firms in 2006 through a P1.9-billion share-swap deal with their previous owners.

SMIC also told the exchange that it had created an executive risk management committee to be headed by company director and former Trade Undersecretary Gregory L. Domingo.

Last year, SMIC secured the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission to hold its SM Supermalls and SM Hypermarkets' main investment business, which currently has 29 SM department stores in its portfolio.

This signals the complete infusion of 20 supermarkets and nine hypermarkets into the books of SMIC.

The move are worth P.G billion in exchange for 56 million new shares of SMIC issued to the previous shareholders of the two companies.

The firm announced a hike in its capital spending for 2007 to P30 billion from P15 billion in 2006, largely on its tourism and mall projects.

Company executive said SMIC would finance 35 to 40 percent of their 2007 budget for projects through debt-denominated debts.

Of the P30-billion in programmed spending in 2007, P7 billion would be earmarked for new malls in Bacolod and Taytay, and the expansion of its Sucat, Pampanga, Pasay and Taytay malls development at the Mall of Asia in Pasay City.

Also, P7 billion will go to its 5,700-hectare resort project in Nasugbu, Batangas and other property projects, while P13 billion will be set aside for the expansion of its department stores, supermarkets and hypermarkets, bringing the total number to 76.

Boulevard eyes Cavite property development

BOULEVARD HOLDINGS INC. PLANS TO DE-

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Contracting of Consulting Services for Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Program

The Development Support Services Center (DSSC) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) invites local consultants to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of: International Expert Team on Energy Efficient Lighting (EEL) Lamp Ballast and Fixture (Luminaire) Manufacturing of the project: "UNDP-GEF DOE Project-Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Program (PELMET)".

The Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Project (PELMET) is intended to address the barriers to widespread adoption of energy efficient lighting (EEL) systems in the Philippines. It is aimed at contributing to the realization of the country's sustainable development objectives and its goal of reducing GHG emissions in the residential sector. It will specifically focus on the promotion of EELs energy efficient version of linear fluorescent lamps (i.e., slim tube fluorescent content), CFLs, high intensity discharge (HID) lamps, ballasts (low loss electromagnetic and electronic) and energy efficient luminaires. The project will accomplish integration of EEL promotion programs in the energy conservation and energy efficiency (EC & EE) programs of the Philippine Department of Energy (DOE), enhance private sector's involvement and appreciation of the benefits of EELs and ensure that environmental impacts associated with the widespread use of EELs are mitigated. The project objectives will be achieved with the implementation of specific barrier removal activities that will involve: (1) upgrading of policies, standards and guidelines on lighting applications, (2) institutional and technical capacity building, (3) consumer education and information dissemination, (4) development and implementation of appropriate financing mechanisms, and (5) mitigating environmental impacts of the widespread utilization of EELs.

To be able to obtain said objectives, the project requires the services of a team of international experts who will assess the local lamp ballast and fixture (luminaire) production facilities in the country and recommend improvements, equipment and technology upgrades that have to be improved, modified and upgraded to allow for better design and production technologies.

For interested parties, the Documents Eligibility Requirements, Instructions to Bidders and Terms of Reference(s) may be procured personally, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PHP 1,000.00 (or US$ 20) for each Contract from the following address:

Development Support Services Center
United Nations Development Programme
48th Floor, Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6810 Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City
Tel. No. 632 901 0373 | loc 4371
Fax No. 632 901 0380 | 901 1177

The abovementioned Bid Documents will be released to all interested participants starting 12 February 2007 to 16 February 2007 only. The Bid Documents shall contain all instructions on the rules, procedures, dates and other schedules for the pre-bid conference and opening of bid envelopes, as well as further details on the scope of services required.

UNDP reserves the right to reject any or all the bids, waive any defect or informality therein, accept the bid and award the contract in the most advantageous offer to the UNDP, for and in behalf of the Department of Energy. UNDP assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expenses or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ETHELINE B. CAPUNO
Manager, DSSC

BTR - February 9, 2007

Magsaysay opens training center

THE MAGSAYSAY GROUP OF COMPANIES opens today the Magsaysay Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts (Mihca), a world-class training facility for those interested in a career in hospitality services, culinary arts and aviation.

US-based Johnson & Wales developed the curriculum for Mihca that features in-depth short certificate courses that aim to equip students with basic and advanced skills in culinary arts and hospitality services. Mihca also offers Tourism Courses certified by the International Air Transport Association.

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Business/Features Editor Margie Quiroga Bajina

BUSINESS *Friday*

Five ways to sell to the *rich*

Affluent find shopping experience more important

By Karen V. de Asis
Contributor

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT SHOPping or consumptive behavior is not always meant to serve basic or physiological needs. As one's income and lifestyle improve, several psychological needs emerge where people engage in complicated purchases and where the shopping process and experience have become more important than the purchase of the final good or service. No doubt these needs are hooked by today's more sophisticated retail environments and pleasurable buying experiences.

Why shop

Urban geographer and anthropologist Conrad Kottak's book "Mirror for Humanity" provides various cultural findings to explain this type of consumer behavior specially evident among those with money to burn "where shopping or consumption becomes a reward, hobby, pastime, an entrance to get out of the house, a social encounter, an entertainment, a form of education..."

Feminists Peter Earl and Simon Pitts in their article "Latent Demand and the Browsing Hypothesis" published in the Managerial and Decision Economics journal affirmed, "Some people may find shop because their social lives are largely empty: a visit to a mall opens up opportunities for social encounters, at least including bystander encounters with store personnel, if not with other shoppers."

Where rich's money goes

Dr. Yoon Hedrick-Wong, economic adviser to Merrill Lynch Philippines in Asia-Pacific, reveals that among Asia's affluent markets—Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan—much of this discretionary spending (estimated at $382 billion in 2004) especially by women consumers is devoted to dining out, personal travel, visiting health spas and other recreational and leisure activities.

In the Philippines, there is a slight variation in discretionary spending among women first followed by personal care and child in household appliances.

Bars on discretionary spending words how rising income causes a change in buying behavior and preference from basic necessities to pleasurable and socially consumptive experiences.

Catering to the affluent

There are at least five ways to cater to markets with discretionary spending. These are:

1. Create a feel good selling environment. Consumers with high disposable income often replace goods before these wear out or consume the same type of services frequently than should be. G.A. Rafael in his book, "The Powerful Consumers," says that "consumers who become optimistic will dispose of old durables than in a more pessimistic frame of mind, they were inclined to keep using." For example, wealthy affluent individuals are less spendthrift when the retail white ambiend by highly affable and responsive sales staff and in retail environments that allow them to move smartly because and touch merchandise without being hassled by sales people.

2. Differentiate your product or service. Wealthy consumers are attracted to goods and services that go beyond the norm or standard acceptable product or service in the category. Apple Mac is the brand of choice of many among the affluent markets because of its sleek, stylish design and customer friendly features not found among far more conventional, retail competitors. So with an ordinary, no- alcohol Duncan monthwash that has become the favored oral care product among the affluent resulting in the recent introduction of an upsize 500 ml version to cater to its more discriminating consumers.

3. Offer a range of items related or complementary products or services in the market practice. Since quite a number among the affluent market consider shopping a retail therapy, executed by the shopping processes with less than the product bought, the buying space becomes more engaging particularly if there is a sequential mode to it. For example, purchase of the latest designer bag from Louis Vuitton may be in part of matching shoes, a suit, etc. all from the same brand.

4. Create avenues for social encounters and/or education. Many among the affluent market are avid learners and innovators. While this is so, services must first up in the discriminating standard and preferences of this market. One must note that an increase in the time spent in the retail area is likely to increase the probability that the potential buyer will make substantial purchases.

5. Use your window and merchandise displays stimulate consumer interest. Affluent shopping begins with browsing better, window and merchandise displays are like tasty morsels of enticing treat were back hard to acquire consumer approval.

(The author is a professor of Marketing and Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional Schools Graduate School of Business and a chief brand strategist of MKS Consulting. Feedback at ar.delasis@skyinet.net.)

ALL ONE'S income improves, social-psychological needs emerge where people engage in unplanned purchases.

Wealthy Filipinos love to wine, dine

FILIPINOS IN THE 'RICH BOOKMAP' LOVE to enjoy the good life. Using their enormous spending power, they pamper themselves with dining only the elite can afford—fine-dine restaurants, expensive concerts and shows, branded clothing and accessories, luxury cars, high-end electronic products, and travels to exotic destinations.

With this inherent love of food, drinks and entertainment, wealthy Filipinos have spent a whopping $1.2 billion on dining and entertainment—a big chunk of their $5.5 billion discretionary expenditure—according to data from the book, "Discovering the Filipino Consumer" by Dr. Yoon Hedrick-Wong, economic adviser to Merrill Lynch Worldwide.

According to the book, wealthy Filipinos, aside from spending lavish amounts on food and entertainment, have spent enormous amounts on other luxuries, such as jewelry ($1 billion), PCs and mobile phones ($300 million), travel and leisure ($10 million), and private health and luxury medicine ($113 million).

Wealthy Filipinos, the book said, represent a small fraction of households in the Philippine society. Of the country's 15 million households, only $1,000 to $75,000, numbered only 281,000 households or 1.7 percent of total households as of 2000 with income of $10.9 billion. But they are expected to rise to 365,300 households by 2015, or 2.7 percent of total households, with $20.1 billion in income. Those in the "rich," with income above $75,000, totaled just 14,600 households, or 0.08 percent of the total households with a $1.5-billion income as of 2005. They are projected to reach 20,600 households, 0.14 percent of total households, in the next 10 years, with $3.1 billion in income. Together, the mass affluent and rich in the Philippines include one segment $6.1 billion in 2015.

How did this segment acquire their wealth?

Most of the prosperous Filipinos class like the Spanish "Shareholder" Ayala, Lopez, Cojuangco and Zobel families and the Chinese-Filipino families Gokongwei, Ty and Sm, have gained riches through what the book called the "inheritance pathway." This is the route where wealth is built through inheritance, family connections and support.

There are two other "pathways to affluence"—the "pioneering pathway" where one creates massive wealth from literally nothing through entrepreneurial energy and successfully seizing and exploiting opportunities, and the "professional pathway" where one acquires professional skills and accreditation to enjoy well-paid employment—but according to the book, these roads are less taken by Filipinos.

As in the Philippines, the wealthy segment in 11 other markets in Asia presents an enormous business opportunity. Overall, the mass affluents and rich segments in Asia-Pacific (excluding Japan) totaled $3 trillion in 2005, with the largest spending coming from wealthy consumers from Japan ($1.16 billion), China ($445.9 billion), Korea ($165 billion), India ($121.9), and Australia ($120.6 billion).

And like Filipinos, dining and entertainment has been the biggest spending item of the wealthy in Japan ($481.3 billion), Korea ($59.4 billion), Hong Kong ($4.1 billion), Malaysia ($1.2 billion), Indonesia ($0.6 billion), Thailand ($1.4 billion), and Singapore ($1.2 billion).

Asia's affluents group, it seems, will grow even more, both in numbers and purchasing power as Hedrick-Wong predicted their accelerated growth.

'If you're throwing out ad recall as an effectiveness metric, why not throw out ad awareness as well?'

Q: WE READ YOUR COLUMN ABOUT ad recall as ad effectiveness metric that's no longer relevant in today's changed advertising media landscape. We were discussing this within the agency and had some concerns/questions when a client known for his analytical dexterity raised a challenging issue. He said: "I believe we all still agree that ad recall is a measure of the quality of ad awareness. As an audience response, ad recall comes after ad awareness. If ad recall is bad, then what comes before must be just as equally bad if not worse. So if you're throwing out ad recall as an ad effectiveness metric, then why not throw out ad awareness as well?"

There was some back and forth exchange of arguments and ideas for as well as against, the position that the issue raised. Almost all comments were rather personal stands and others appealed to tradition. Some really took "the bull by the horns" and squarely engaged the logic of the issue raised. Will you please let us in on your comments? How best to answer or issue narrowly resolve the issue?

A: There are several ways to resolve the issue. We'll deal first with what you called "engaging the logic of the issue raised." For that resolution avenue, it's useful to reduce the argument into its syllogism.

Major premise — "Bad brain can come only from a bad meal."

Minor premise — "Ad recall is a 'bad' fruit."

Conclusion — "Therefore, ad awareness is a 'bad meal.'"

From this conclusion follows the suggested action attached to "throw out ad awareness as well."

The obvious confusion comes from the fact that the major premise of the syllogism is flawed. So the rules of logic render the conclusion invalid. That is why how quickly engaging the logic of the issue dismisses the otherwise seemingly compelling argument of your analytical client.

We should of course not only argue from logic but also from the reality of consumer responses to advertising. One of the many versions of the "Hierarchy of Effects Model" of how advertising works does a simple and useful summary of that reality. Here's the 5-step version of the model. See Figure 1.

We've seen some advertising media agencies and their media directors using this Figure 1 version of the model to lend basic research support to their media mix and media schedule recommendations. In Figure 1, the model says that the very first response of the market to an ad campaign is ad awareness (AW). The model also says that regardless the role of ad awareness in advertising's effectiveness process. That's the role of being the consumers' "first response" to advertising.

This is a role that unfortunately has practically been ignored in the discussion and debate about ad effectiveness so, to many cases, not emphasized enough. Being a first response means that the rate of ad recording ad exposure up to the ultimate end recipient of purchase is dependent upon the size of that base. Figure 1 identifies the sequence after ad awareness as developing this sequence: ad recall (AR), then the advertised brand's image (AIM), next the purchase intention (PI), and finally the actual purchase (AP).

Let's appreciate this role by doing the following exercise. Suppose the ad awareness (AW) response level of the consumer generated is just half of what is shown in Figure 1. What happens to the succeeding responses? Figure 2 pictures what can happen.

The "bottom-line effectiveness" of actual purchase (AP) is also substantially reduced. In Figure 2, it's also cut in half. That's of course assuming that the size of each succeeding consumer response is reduced in direct proportion to the ad awareness response size. It's the obvious consequence. Usually, the subsequent response reduction is less than proportionate. But the important point to note and wonder is that all subsequent responses up to the ultimate target of purchasing actual purchaser are reduced. That's the critical significance of a base response. And so, that's the critical significance of the ad awareness response.

Now, back to what's responsible for ad awareness. Figures 1 and 2 identify media schedule (or the media mix) as the key factor (and, by inference, investment) as the responsible variable. If we transform the question, "what's responsible" to "who's responsible," we have to admit that they are the media team members in your ad agency.

We of course have clients who challenge this designation especially when they hear us label media weight or media investment. Some clients say they are the responsible source. Let's be clear about this then. Clients or advertisers are the payers. But they are not the ones who determine where (media mix) and when (media schedule) the money will be allocated and spent. And that's the media weight or allocation of the media investment that we are talking about.

Who are we dubbing the discussion as the final arbiter?

In plain English for an advertiser account, we've often seen invited ad agencies or those interested in the account, sending their respective presenting team made up only of account executives and creative directors. In marketing consultants to an ad agencies, we always ask the presenting ad agency team, either at the start or after presentation, why their media director and his/her media group are not part of the presenting team.

This is particularly critical in the ad campaign for a new product intro where the ATL budget is not as large as in a P&G or a Unilever intro campaign but is still quite large where an ambitious team must set share target of more than 5 percent. Let's suppose that you benchmark against an existing competitor brand with a 7 percent or 8 percent market share. Then suppose further that you found that the consultant data from PMC indicated that the market leader enjoys a brand top of mind awareness (TOM) of 75 percent. This tells you that to attain your targeted 7 percent market share, your ad campaign must be able to get your new brand above that mark ad awareness.

But let's say that you don't have the benchmarked brand invested in generating the 75 percent ad awareness. It show any realistic way for you to get out of this hairy situation? What can you do to still get a 75 percent ad awareness?

We've advocated a term "noise-to-media weight ratio," even with a small and limited budget still target and attain what looked like an almost impossible year 1 ad awareness goal. The common denominator of those ad media innovations is creativity in their media strategy, planning and buying. And this is exactly the kind of media creativity we need to do the above ad campaign situation. It's a situation that's becoming more and more the usual advertiser dilemma.

Do we have this kind of out-of-the-box ad media thinkers around? Of course, we know. For example, those serving actually media internal advertisers, we've experienced the likes of Mike Abadilla at Universal McCann. Mike, when challenged to do so, does not resort to the expediency provided by the AGB or Nielsen TV data and ranting numbers. He goes out and creates innovative placements. Instead, the end her team search and work on the known as well as the new "contact points" of the client's target consumers. New and emerging "contact points" are, for example, the SMS, online games, blogs, e-bulletin, texting, internet surf + video, and the like. On the other hand, those raising save of money or many child advertisers, we've seen the likes of Nilo Cruz, an independent free lancing media consultant, design equally creative and cost-effective media packages.

So there's the long answer that your client but lengthy challenging question rightly deserves. Though your question was simple because it sets just asking about the simple relationship between ad awareness and ad recall, the "correct" answer was not at all simple nor straightforward. As you can infer from the preceding, the answer could have been also simple had the relationship between awareness and recall been also simple, that is, non-critical. But it's not so. That relationship turned out to be asymmetrical. What to do when recall was not true of ad awareness, and what role ad awareness would do was something and many.

Feedback or [illegible]

Gov't allows Australia's Lafayette to resume mining operations in Albay

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY ALLOWED an Australian-operated mine to resume operations following a 2005 cyanide-laced waste spill.

Lafayette Mining Ltd. had temporarily suspended commercial operations in Rapu-Rapu's lead-to-Albay after the incident.

Lafayette's request to lift the order stopping its operations "is granted," Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Angelo Reyes said a news conference.

The go-ahead came after the company passed environmental standards set by the DENR and an independent team of mining experts during a 120-day test run.

Lafayette's Rapu Rapu polymetallic project started commercial production in July 2005, producing an average of about 2,500 ounces of gold a month.

Reyes, in lieu of the Mineral Adjudication Board, signed the order lifting the suspension order slapped on Lafayette in 2005. The company has been asked to pay a total of P16.7 million in fines for its environmental violations.

"The order allowing them to operate comes with stringent conditions. These include the implementation of the operational control measures identified by the Mines Bureau and the independent team of experts from the academe, nongovernment organizations and other stakeholders," Reyes said.

The independent team of experts led by Dr. Carlos Primo David (for geology and marine sciences) from the University of the Philippines and mining geologist Hermilo Bolaños, who previously worked for Benguet Corp., also reported in the briefing that they found the integrity and design of the dam acceptable and in compliance with environmental standards.

Mines Bureau Director Romeo Baniqued added that the independent team met through the 120-day test run that Lafayette had made all the necessary adjustments required in the critical mine facilities, particularly the acid mine drainage dam.

The acid mine drainage dam that holds chemicals used in the ore processing has been expanded to 149 meters from 120 meters. An 800-meter long spillway storm drainage canal that will ensure that no accidental spill is prevented especially during heavy rains has also been constructed.

"A monthly inspection of the government team led by the Mines Bureau and a monthly inspection will still be conducted by the independent team of experts to monitor the Rapu-Rapu mines," Reyes added. The Lafayette project on Rapu-Rapu island, one of 24 being promoted by the government to revive the country's mining sector, suspended operations three months after producing its first gold in July 2005 due to the spill.

The mine operations at Rapu-Rapu were disrupted for more than a year due to a two-day closure of mine tailing spills in October 2005. The company subsequently won provisional approval for a trial run of pipes to installations on environmental safety imposed by government.

The Rapu-Rapu project was the first foreign-operated mine to open after the Supreme Court upheld in December 2004 the legality of a law granting 100 percent foreign ownership of mining projects.

The Rapu-Rapu mine was forecast to generate revenues of $350 million-a-year.

Lafayette Mining Philippines president Carlos Dominguez said the company has invested $6 million to further improve the mine facility, picking up its investments to $100 million since it began operations in 2004.

Aside from Lafayette of Australia, South Korea's LG International Corp. and the miner-run Korea Resources Corp. together hold 26 percent of Lafayette Philippines.

Auction of Diwalwal gold project canceled

THE PLANNED AUCTION THIS month of the Diwalwal gold mining project in Compostela Valley has been canceled and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources admitted that the would again delay the development of the mines for another six months to one year.

According to Samuel Escarcha, Secretary Angelo T. Reyes, the DENR's Mineral Resource Mineral Development Corp. would not push through with the auction to conduct further "clean-up operations" in order to correct conflicting interests with small-scale miners.

"It is [not] the intention of government to clean up the place due to security problems, also the problems with small-scale miners and other conflicting claims [on the area]," Reyes said.

He noted that he has assigned the MMSDC to prepare a new study by the end of the month for Diwalwal.

Ownership problems with small-scale miners in Mt. Diwalwal have again led to violent skirmishes in the area that, in turn, created off-peak investments, including Harmony Gold Mining Co. Ltd., the world's fifth biggest gold producer based in South Africa.

Small-scale miners are apparently objecting to the entry of the two companies in the area.

Diwalwal, a mining town in the Compostela Valley, has more than 30,000 people operating small-scale mines since the 1980s.

The Supreme Court ruled in 2006 that the mineral-rich areas of Mt. Diwalwal should remain under the administration of the government and owned by the state.

MMSDC, the investment and development arm of the government, wanted a strategic partner that will help it develop some 4,000 hectares of Mt. Diwalwal's mineral lands.

According to the MMSDC's initial estimates, the site has a mine life of 20 years.

The area has drawn the attention of several companies, among them Philex Mining Corp., Australian firm Newmont Mining Corp., Goldfields Mining and Sumitomo Mining Corp.

The Mines Bureau said this project would require an investment of $75 million.

Christine A. Gaylican

Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

RESOLUTION NO. 7818

Promulgated: 6 February 2007

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY 1411 Bldg., 1630 San Marcelino cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits.

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
YSM PHT INC. 26/F, BMI Plaza City, Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Shagmal Lim	General Manager
E WORLD TRAVEL & TOURS INC. CORP. 1505 Peak of the Orient Tower, 1240 Roxas Blvd., Manila	Ge Wen Hong	Tour Manager
MARIST DIAMOND LA MANILA cor. Adela and Makati Aves., Makati City	Jaume Bonjo Kardaina	F&B Trainee
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES, INC. 22, 56, 17 & 18/Flrs., Cyber One Bldg., Eastwood Ave., Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Young Tae Kim	Pre Auditor
KEYWAVE CORPORATION Unit 305 Summit 1 Office Tower, 330 Sucat Blvd., Parañaque City	Sae Chae Kim	Freshman Cam Engineer
HINDUJA TMT, LTD. 8th E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Bo. Quirino, Brgy. Tandy, Quezon City	Pushkar Mehr	President
ASIANA AIRLINES, INC. 2/F Dasmariñas Towers, 934 Corral St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Jung Gu Shin	Senior Technician
YSM PHT INC. 26/F, BMI Plaza City, Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Hee Young Lee	Manager
YSM PHT INC. 26/F, BMI Plaza City, Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Gi Hyun Park	Assistant Manager
YSM PHT INC. 26/F, BMI Plaza City, Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Jun Hyong Yang	Technical Supervisor
CHINA AIRLINES, LTD. 22F Lobi I, Golden Empire Tower, 1520 Roxas Blvd. cor. Pedro Faura St., Ermita, Manila	Yi Chiu Lee a/k.a. Solomon Lee	General Manager
CHINA AIRLINES, LTD. 22F Lobi I, Golden Empire Tower, 1520 Roxas Blvd. cor. Pedro Faura St., Ermita, Manila	Chun Yuan Chiang	Maintenance Manager
HANKOOK AIR SERVICES INC. Unit 101 & 102 Yorkshire St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Jong Kun Yoon	General Manager
IBM BUSINESS SERVICES INC. 12, 56, 17 & 18/Flrs., Cyber One Bldg., 811 Eastwood Ave., Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Kanchisa Shiba	Pre Auditor
ALABANG FORTUNE EIGHT GLOBAL SCHOOL INC. Unit 1002 Alabang Business Tower, Acacia Ave., Muntinlupa City	Heejeong Kim	Managing Director
PHILKYOCERA AMIA INC. Lot 6B-1-1 Cavitex Tow Tower, J.W. Diokno Dr., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Hiroo Ito aung [illegible]	Director

If you have any information/objection to the above-mentioned application please communicate with the Regional Director.

LUCIOUS M. TRAJANO
Regional Director

EPSA - Feb. 9, 2007

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Futures Exchange, Inc.
North Bay Boulevard, Navotas City
Tel. No. 632-281-0061 Website: www.nfa.gov.ph

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

[illegible]

Bidding shall be by P/L 100 kilograms net each or multiples thereof. Bidders are required to submit with their bidding offer an appropriate margin from acceptable securities, as follows:

Amount	Specification	Quantity (P/100 kilograms)
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

Bidders may submit their bids not later than 10:00 AM per specification. Effective bids shall indicate the minimum volume acceptable in case of award. Failure to indicate minimum volume shall be deemed as the entire quantity offered. Maximum volume capacity of award shall be 10,000 MT.

Bidders shall be required to post a bid bond equivalent to 5% of the highest value offered in their bid. Failure to post bid bond shall disqualify the bid. Bidders may opt to post bid bond in the form of cash deposit, manager's check, or irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a depository bank authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and confirmed by a reputable local bank. The bond shall be authorized by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the award in the form of cash deposit, manager's check, or irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a depository bank authorized by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and confirmed by a reputable local bank. The performance bond shall be forfeited in favor of the NFA in case of default in the delivery of the award.

List of Eligible Requirements and Instructions for Bidders (Seller Account Holding Application) may be obtained from the [illegible] Tel. Nos. 632-281-0061 to 63, 632-281-0064 and 632-281-0066 or PSEX Trading Floor at Warehouse No. 1, Philippine Sugar Futures Exchange, Inc. Compound, North Bay Boulevard, Navotas, Quezon City, also www.philsugarexchange.com.

[illegible]

The NFA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any defect therein, and to accept such bid as may be considered most advantageous to the Agency.

(Sgd.) LORENZO J. JUNIA
Administrator

PSE, Feb. 9, 2007

BUSINESS

VAN HEUSEN
END OF SEASON
SALE
UP TO 60% OFF ON SELECTED MERCHANDISE
JAN. 11, 2007- FEB. 18, 2007

RP-China trade up 17.5%

By Nimmo M. Clavajo

TRADE BETWEEN THE PHILIPPINES and China went up by 17.5 percent to $7.3 billion as of November last year, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said the increase could be traced to the memorandum of Southeast Asian Nations' summit with China held last month and the 31 bilateral agreements signed with Beijing officials.

"The growth in trade can be partly attributed to the implementation of the Trade in Goods Agreement between Asean and China starting January 2006 as well as to aggressive efforts of governments and of business sectors to open up more opportunities for economic partnership," Favila said.

He added that when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited last month, 11 pacts were signed covering economic and technical cooperation, financing, agriculture, fisheries, energy and infrastructure development.

Both Manila and Beijing seek to boost the movement of goods, services and investments in both directions to the $30-billion mark within the next five years.

Favila had said that after a string of investment and trade promotion missions to the mainland in the past three years, Chinese capital has been committed to or is being considered for ventures in the Philippines, including government's flagship projects in transportation and power.

To consolidate the expanding areas of economic cooperation, both governments have agreed to streamline the mandate of the existing Joint Trade Committee, as provided under a memorandum of understanding on the promotion of trade investments and economic cooperation signed during Chinese President Hu Jintao's state visit in 2005.

MANAGEMENT MEN OF THE YEAR. James Ang(ate) Zobel de Ayala (left), president and CEO of Ayala Corp., shares center stage with George S.K. Ty, Metrobank Group chair. Both were named Management Men of the Year 2006 by the Management Association of the Philippines.

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INQUIRER

Triratna ready to bid for Transco contract

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CONSORTIUM LED BY local firm Triratna Holdings Corp. is ready to bid for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. concession, as long as key "structural issues" in the final transaction documents are addressed.

In a statement issued yesterday, the group said that during last Monday's bidding for the Transco concession, its representatives asked Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. president Wilson Ong Ui to defer the bidding until all issues are resolved.

"The consortium believes that its requests are highly reasonable as they are entirely consistent with customary terms for an international (merger and acquisition) transaction," it said.

Other members of the consortium are Malaysia's Sapura Industrial Berhad (5 percent) and Newbridge Asia IV (10.26 percent).

The Triratna group, together with another pre-qualified bidder—the group of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. (60 percent) and China's State Grid Corp. (40 percent), represented by Hidee Benson—did not submit a bid, leaving the consortium of Citadel Holdings Corp. (51 percent) and Italy's Terna (49; 140 percent) as the lone bidder for the Transco concession.

This prompted PSALM to declare the bidding a failure.

Bid to prove that it was serious in securing the concession to upgrade, maintain and expand the nationwide transmission grid despite not submitting a final bid by the Feb. 5 seven deadline, the Triratna consortium said it provided the PSALM board with copies of its $39-million bid bond, "as good faith in demonstrating its willingness to join in the bidding process provided the concession addressed the important documentation issues."

"The consortium remains very interested in participating in the privatization process," the Triratna group said.

Marina sees promise in ship repair sector

By Rica T. Cleto-Ando

LOCAL SHIPYARDS MAY RAKE additional income from ship repair, according to an official of the Maritime Industry Authority.

"We want to enhance the sector through aggressive marketing among foreign-flagged ships that call on local ports. Instead of going to Singapore, for example, they can just have simple repairs done here," said Maximo M. Lorenzo, head of Marina's Shipping Regulatory Office.

He said, however, that many local shipyards were underequipped.

He urged these shipyards to start improving their repair facilities to draw a wider range of clients, and perhaps later go into full-scale ship building.

"However, upgrading our facilities to cope with demands of international-standard ships will require heavy investment," the official said.

As for shipbuilding, Lorenzo said local shipyards, such as those in Cebu, have begun establishing ties with foreign ship builders to receive technical assistance.

The Inquirer has reported that the Shipyard Association of Cebu (SAC) has tied up with the Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Group in Guizhou to make four double-hull cargo tankers by 2008.

SAC president Arthur Uy, who owns Cebu-based Colorado Shipyard Corp., told the Inquirer that the 50,000-DWT delivery time for double-hull tankers coincides with the global deadweight of 1,750 tons was 16 months.

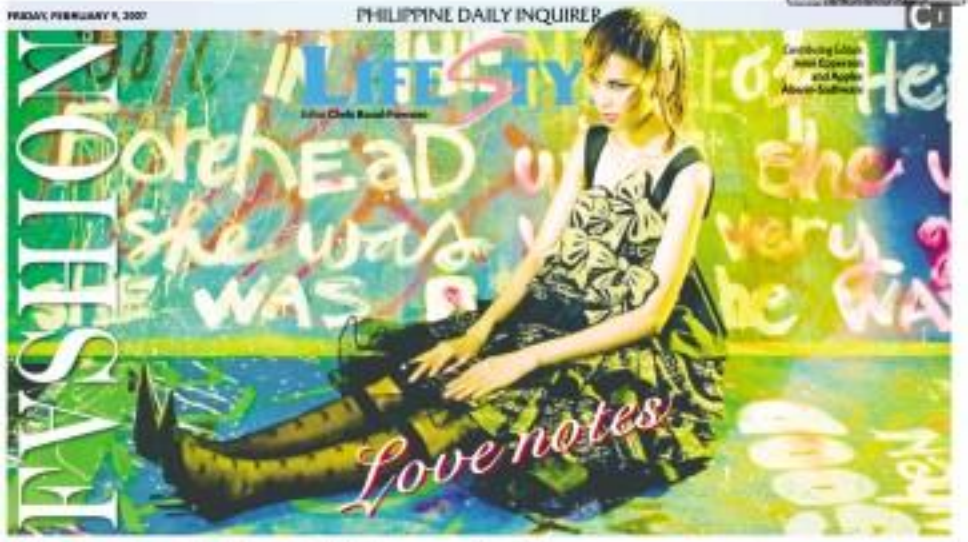
Another demand trigger was the mandatory vessel retirement program for old ships being implemented by Marina, Lorenzo said.

Lorenzo said the average life span of each vessel was 30 to 35 years, and classed vessels could self-operate well beyond 30 years.

Unclassed vessels, however, were considered old at 15 years, Lorenzo said.

He said other opportunities were in the roll-on roll-off shipbuilding and drydocking sector, which Marina also wanted to promote.

"Local shipyards have facilities to serve demand for double-hull tankers," Lorenzo said. "Hindi overall, local shipyards have until 2015 to capitalize on opportunities."



Love potion No. 9

Mich Dulce's Spring/Summer 2007 collection is equal parts whimsy and wearability

SHE'S MYSTERICAL AND kinsky, unconventional and controversial. Now, Mich Dulce is making another bold statement with her Spring/Summer 2007 Collection.

Expect a Valentine fling this season from a celebrated young designer who has gained recognition at the Preto Young Designers' Competition and the Mega Young Designers' Competition, and has also been nominated as Revolutionary Designer of the Year at the MTV Style Awards.

The Spring/Summer 2007 collection is trademark Mich, as expect equal parts whimsy and wearability—and a touch of weirdness—with her signature quirks and silhouette draping.

It has a touch of nostalgia, with pretty pieces, silk-screened diamonds and, of course, her usual tri-angled sculpted neckline details.

The collection could even possibly get you in the mood for romance (and mischief): this Valentine's fling with Mich's embroidered and screen-printed tees, silk. The collection merges contemporary shapes and prints with a tailored sensibility.

But what's the added exclamation point? It's her intelligent, at the hip, relaxed theme with the French thread thread (AKA: [illegible]).

It's a mention to [illegible] between a designer [illegible]

Josei Epperson

Love potion No. 9

From page 41

with a penchant for handmade, crafty kitsch and a 250-year-old company committed to building creativity through DIY fashion. An avid endorser of self-expression through stitching, DMC thought it very fitting to work with a designer who has a passion for handmade objects.

You can see this element in the limited edition Mich Dulce for DMC accessories, which are a mix of homespun classic. Her boho, hugs, cushies and hats are beautifully embroidered. Her collections defies the stereotype that cross stitching and needlepoint are hobbies reserved solely for your lola.

Take it from the dynamic young designer who says: "It breaks the barriers of cross stitch and modernizes kitsch." For sure, I'm welcoming some exposed threads.

Mich Dulce's S/S 2007 collection is soon to be available at Store For All Seasons, Rustan's Makati or may be ordered through 0915 893 1743. The Mich Dulce for DMC accessory line will be available at DMC stores.

E-mail the author at fjbolton@inquirer.com.ph

Clothes and accessories Mich Dulce
www.michdulce.com 09 (1 091) 710
Stitched pieces Mich Dulce for DMC
Creative direction + styling Melvin Mejica
Art direction + photography
BrownSaltwMilkBoys.com
Production design
NewDawnTreeConcepts.com
Makeup Erika Sauncho for MAC
Hair Melvin Mejica
Model Ria Bolivar

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SMART TALK

valentine gift ideas valentine gift ideas valentine gift ideas valentine gift ideas valentine gift ideas valentine gift ideas

WHITE GOLD necklace with pearls, amethyst, citrine and orange garnet, and white gold earrings with amethyst and orange garnet, all from Rocks by Ana Rocha. Some pieces available at Pierre Chevalerie 2, and Felicity Shagrin-Le Plaza Mall. Strawberry Fierce cake from UCC Coffee. Rocks by Ana Rocha is an exhibit. hours Mon.-Thu. 7-10 at the lobby of Greenbelt 2 Makati.

Just desserts

MIND TO MIND: Diamonds are supposedly a woman's best friend. But with the dawning of hunky Leo's eye-opening movie 2pity titled "Blood Diamond," some women (not all, mind you) have lost their taste for those pricey sparklers.

In case you lucked out with one this politically correct category, thank your lucky stars and consider Ingrian Fashion's diamond-free "diamond" gift suggestions.

Give your woman her fair desserts (in a measure of sparkling, that is!) and a dose of fashion fun with these sweet little accessories—sans diamonds—from some of our most talented homegrown jewelry designers like Yvonne de Leon-Gonzalez, Ana Rocha and Bencie Santos.

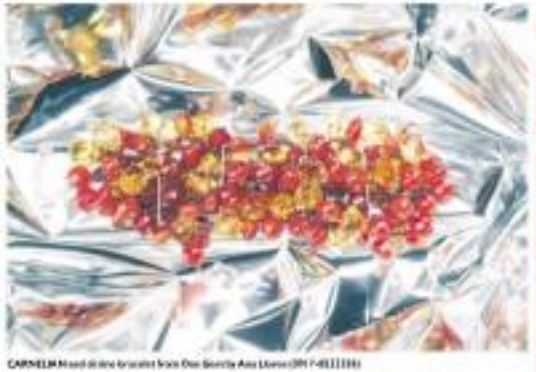
Their tempting confections—and we're not talking about the cakes—are usually made of vibrant semiprecious stones that are all the rage this wedding season. Or for an at-once-cute accessory from Ice Crystals that can keep up any outfit, from the most basic white tee to a little black dress. Or choose a colorful necklace and earrings that are not in white gold, from Rocks.

They're extra-special Valentine's treats that look sweet enough to take—and perfect fashion finds that will surely impress your better half!

Arif

Photography Rene Mejia
Styling Mikel Arraya
Thanks to UCC Coffee for the dessert cakes featured along with the accessories

CINNAMON sandpiper with cat's eye, agate, rondelle cell pearl and kabe sponge accent, by Bencie Santos (912-6871 | 09/www.encieaccessories.com); White Choco Strawberry Cheesecake from UCC Coffee



CARNELIAN Mixed stone bracelet from Ana Rocha by Ana Liberia (09 17-8111116)

ORANGE rabbit sandpiper from Ice Crystals by Yvonne de Leon-Gonzalez (tel. 721-1799); Midnight Decadence cake from UCC Coffee

LIFESTYLE

FASHION BUZZ
Hot, haute, hot news!

"PHILIPPINES' Next Top Model" host Rufa Gutierrez

Model citizen

GUESS WHO'S IN THE RUNning for the "Philippines' Next Top Model?" host? Girl, it's Rufa Gutierrez!

Solar Entertainment Corp. prepares to set the tone of Solar Free TV's new direction with the "Philippines' Next Top Model," an exciting new reality series based on the popular hit show "America's Next Top Model," produced by Tyra Banks.

Seeking to promote a new brand of entertainment that "breaks conventional standards of the reality genre, the "Philippines' Next Top Model" aims to search for the country's next big fashion icon.

Actress-model and former beauty queen Rufa Gutierrez will lead the search by giving guidance to ordinary young women and turning them into supermodels who will embody the confidence of the modern-day Filipina.

Stopping abruptly doesn't work for everyone. Reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke before completely quitting is a clinically proven alternative. Start by cutting down a target number of cigarettes that you smoke each day, while using Nicorette to control your cravings. Then it's easier to quit for good.

Cut down with nicorette then stop.

Cut down then Stop

Have you ever tried quitting smoking and after all your attempts, find yourself smoking yet another stick of cigarette? Quitting instantly is not easy. Statistics show that up to 2/3 of people who attempted to quit smoking relapse within a few days.

Most people try to quit smoking "cold turkey" but become overwhelmed by the cravings and urge to smoke often. One of the main reasons is due to the addictive nicotine present in each cigarette stick. Quitting cold turkey is not for everyone and failed attempts to quit often leads to frustration and feelings of defeat. The good news is that there is hope for smokers out there who want to quit eventually. A solution is to CUT DOWN first, then eventually STOP. This is proven to be an effective alternative for people who want to gradually kick the habit. This method helps you be in command of your cigarette intake at a pace with which you were accustomed.

Here are four steps that will help the smoker cut down then stop.

Step 1: During the first six weeks, target the number of cigarettes to cut down per day and the time wherein do an while using a Nicotine Replacement Therapy product such as the Nicorette (nicotine) gum to manage your cravings. It is recommended to have at least a 50% reduction in cigarettes per day for best results.

Step 2: Continue cutting down on your cigarettes and while using Nicorette up to six months from the first time you started cutting down on the cigarettes.

Step 3: Within 9 months, stop smoking and continue the use of Nicorette to relieve cravings.

Step 4: Use of Nicorette is gradually reduced then stopped completely. With these 4 steps, being smoke-free is made more manageable and easy.

Nicorette gum has been clinically proven safe and effective to use. The World Health Organization advocates the use of NRT products, such as the Nicorette gum, as a valuable tool in the fight against cigarette smoking, and supports its use by smokers who wishes kunt the habit.

Nicorette can be purchased without prescription at all Mercury Drugstores nationwide. For more information on Nicorette, you can log on to:

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Holiday Inn

He casually walks in wearing a basic T-shirt, quirky jacket and jeans, slinging his trendy messenger bag. She is one specially adorned for her first proud stroll in her figured top and up to the minute olive tulip skirt... Although they make an unsuring pair, they are undeniably drawn to each other. It must be true that opposites attract.

ON HIM. Calvin Klein jeans blue T-shirt, gray nylon jacket and gray slim jeans; Springfield gray messenger bag. On her: Liz Claiborne beige tie-neck blouse and maroon Victorian blouse; Laundry olive tulip skirt

Laws of attraction

Photography Erik Livingstone
Styling Bhai Commandante
Makeup Bobbie Fiberra
Hair Bea Mina
Models Julio and Mariana of Monique Models
Shot on locations at Greenbelt 3 and Greenbelt 4 malls

Apples' Pickings

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

It's a tale as old as time. Boy meets girl, eyes lock, hearts soar and, voila, love is in the air. Feelings of romance and desire are heightened with a simple touch or a tender smile. It's a fateful encounter, a unique connection, a perfect match. Capture the heat of the season of hearts in standout style, and let your very own story of romance unfold.

E-mail the author at ybabies@inquirer.com.ph

He is dressed in a snuggly fresh pique and faded jeans while she is in shiny fashionista clothings. They're an odd sight but he sure notices she has her.

ON HIM. Polo Jeans Co. black and gray polo, gray bottom-down polo shirt and faded jeans; Calvin Klein jeans white belt. On her: Laundry ombre chiffon tie-neck blouse; Mesa gray-wash top; Liz Claiborne denim knee-length skirt; Episode black vest

Sitting pretty in her polka-dotted top and maroon plunged skirt, she finds comfort in the silence between them.

ON HERE. Springfield plum-striped bottom-down polo, gray houndstooth cardigan and tie-worn bowling shoes; Polo Jeans Co. jeans. On her: Liz Claiborne black polka-dot blouse, cream lacy blouse and maroon V-taped skirt

Peg steals a moment on the streets in his classic striped bottom-down shirt and jeans, content as she calls him "mine."

ON HIM. Calvin Klein jeans blue-striped bottom-down shirt and jeans; Polo Jeans Co. white hoodie with fleece lining. On her: Laundry beige mock hoodie; Mesa white-striped tie-neck sleeveless blouse; Liz Claiborne gray plaid skirt; Crossing crossbody bag; Chantal earrings

MARC Jacobs Fall 2007 fashion show during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York

Marc Jacobs, NY designers go separate ways

Big Apple designers follow the rhythms of the streets, but grunge-chic originator suddenly goes classical

NEW YORK—DESIGNERS showing their Fall-Winter 2007/08 collections at fashion week in New York are doing so with color, flowing lines and loose cuts, despite leading star Marc Jacobs signaling a new direction.

Fashion week so far has maintained its emphasis on the dress, which is still the showpiece, but has also thrown jumpsuits, short coats and trousers, either cut close-fitted or loose and high on the waist.

Bert Jacobs, a major influence in US fashion and presenting perhaps the most popular runway of the week, showed a distinct change from his previous seasons, featuring silhouettes, straight dresses and long coats.

Gone are the voluminous coats and superimposed designs. Jacobs' next season sees a more unpretentious wardrobe for women, with circular hats, trouser suits and straight dresses either buttoned or finished with a belt.

Oscar de la Renta's collections used a heavy palate mostly of gray and black with color highlights and featured fur around the collars and hemlines, some of which were above the knee.

Brazilian designer Alexander Herchcovitch meanwhile took comic inspiration from the country, dressing his models in flower print creased cloth or silk dresses worn, for example, under a green jacket.

The young designer presented some sculptured pieces in a week usually reserved for spontaneous swing-exaggerated sleeves and some intriguing materials such as black plastic for headdresses.

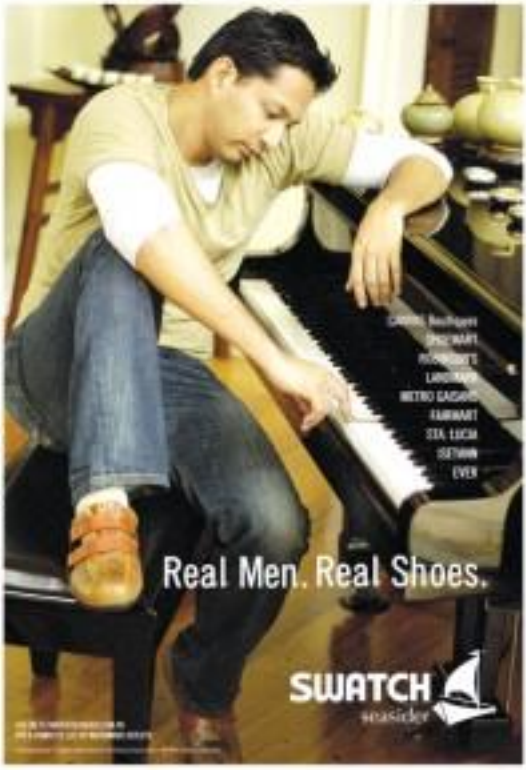
Donna Karan again used a lot of gray and black, highlighted with yellow, shocking pink and sequins in miniskirts and dresses cut above the knee.

Carrying on from last season, there were copious dresses harking back to the '60s from designers such as Tory Burkenson.

Richardson's models wore fleshy tones and pearl-gray pinafore and empire-line dresses, set off with silver Wedder ballet flats.

For damask coats were cut short but with plenty of volume. The low pants on the catwalk were in satin, cut high and worn with short blouses. AFP

OSCAR de la Renta ALEXANDRE Herchcovitch OSCAR de la Renta DONNA Karan



Life's a beach

Speedo collaborates with Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons for the second time to create a range of swimwear, T-shirts and swim caps

Text by Charlie V. Moral
Photos by Jim Guico Pascilan

AFTER ITS SUCCESSFUL partnerships with famous swimwear designers Ichiko Oldeboh and Rosa Cha, Speedo has collaborated with Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçons for the second time to create a range of swimwear, T-shirts and swim caps to be released this spring.

The first Speedo-Comme des Garçons collection came out in Spring 2006.

But before you head out to the nearest Speedo shop, hold your horses!

"They're too expensive," an almost apologetic Blaine O'Donnell said at the Speedo Spring/Summer 2007 fashion show on Thursday, when asked if the collection will be made available in the Philippine market. O'Donnell is Speedo's regional business development director.

That, an aford thought. "Well, maybe a few select pieces will be available," he said.

The Philippines is among the Top 5 markets of the leading swimwear brand in the Asia-Pacific region. Even then, "We try to be relevant to the market," explained O'Donnell's assistant, Joanna Mon, such that not all the collections are brought to the islands. Meaning, only offshore markets like Japan or Hong Kong carry the entire special lines like that of Kawakubo's.

Japan remains the No. 1 market for the brand in the region, and its birthplace, Australia, a close second.

Expensive and exciting

Not unexpectedly, though. The brand has an expensive and exciting spring collection to justify any unfulfilled designer longings.

In its efforts to become more and more a lifestyle brand, Speedo has also launched a range called Mod/Speedo. It's inspired by yoga, with a mixture of wrap tops, tanks, track pants designed both for performance and relaxation. It features the Sculpture fabric that is said to flatter any shape as it "contours and restores" the body.

For the serious aquatic athletes, a capsule collection called Melbourne has been created as the Australian city hosts the 12th World Championships of Fina, the International Federation of Swimming, to will March. Under this line falls Speedo's performance wear, including improved versions of its charkskin, inspired Paddle Pill. Designs include the Melbourne camouflage, underscoring the Down-under of the competitive swimmer.

The essential vibe of beach volleyball is incorporated into ethnic active wear, named for the sport. Quick drying graphic T-shirts, tank-tink, racerback bikini tops, boxing shorts with drawstring waists and three-quarter pants for chi-line combine function and style.

While the name Speedo remains synonymous to performance, the brand is continually expanding its summer repertoire, such was on knowing the market's interest in its bathing suit lines, like spring's Kix, a collection of sexier and more colorful brazilian carnival-inspired pieces, in gushering spirit honored in the show finale by director Ariella Aquino.

Hit show

By all accounts, Speedo's Thursday presentation was a hit, well attended by both the business and diplomatic communities. The venue itself had everyone intrigued, however: Why would the British ambassador's residence play host to an item-item...or is it Australian? —brand's promotional campaign?

The curiosity apparently didn't escape the evening's host, to his welcome note, Ambassador Peter Beddingham explained that, indeed, many mistake Speedo to be an American (wrong!) or an Australian brand (partly true).

Speedo was, in fact, founded by a Scottish immigrant in Bondi Beach, Australia, in 1930, though it wouldn't be known by its moniker name until 1928. The American link is the brand's close association with such iconic American athletes, including contemporary swimming champions like Michael Phelps. Speedo's headquarters are now located in Nottingham, United Kingdom, thus the British connection.

SPEEDO'S new range of wetsuits uses high-tech materials to suit both professional aquatic athletes and weekend water-sports enthusiasts. One line, called Trim Series, is specially designed for the fashion-conscious.

Editor-Chiefs Ramon Farmora
LIFESTYLE

Contributing Editor
Rio Francisco-Prieto

KNOCKOUT!

Rio Francisco-Prieto

BEAUTY

Face vs accessories

Highlight your face every time; you don't want too many things cluttering your look

ACCESSORIES HAVE played a major role in the fashion and beauty industries. In fact, I really can't say a hundred percent that they belong to the fashion side of the spectrum since many accessories actually draw attention to our face or any part we want to highlight, in the same way that a person who wears an anklet is hopefully confident about her legs.

More elaborate, there are so many neck pieces and earrings now that are larger than what people used to wear, some were much more open than doors to misinterpretation and fancy jewelry. I don't think those best pieces are something to be ashamed of. In fact, if you can't afford the real ones, why not get good alternatives?

The high prices of real stones have made people more creative in using equally beautiful but more accessible ma-

MORE

BIANCA Fernandez wears earrings by Carlo Duarte (tel. 01 10004, 0917-5344700)

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Bob is back!

Hollywood stylist Steven Lake shares pointers on how you can pull off this cut—regardless of the shape of your face

By Charlie V. Moral

THE BOB CUT, MADE so popular in the 1960s by hair legend Vidal Sassoon, is on a major comeback this year. And while some Filipinas have caught on, sporting blunt bangs and sleek bob 'dos à la Twiggy as early as the last quarter of 2006, majority of Filipinas have yet to jump in on this trend.

Some women lifestyle spoke to were video too content with the same hairstyle they've been wearing for the last five or 10 years that they're scared to try a new one. Others felt their "round" or "too-square" face shape won't suit the bob look.

Bangs

Of the lucky, Hollywood stylist Steven Lake disagreed. "Everyone can sport a bob," said the 36-year-old Boston, Massachusetts, native. "Of course, you're really lucky if you have an oval face as the bob will look really good on you. But, you see, bangs can give an illusion of a longer face so it should suit a round face, too."

However, if you have angular or moon-shaped features, Lake suggested angles bangs instead of going for a full blunt cut. Dollops layers around the face, regardless of length, can create the illusion of a slimmer song, he added. So if you prefer to keep your shampoo commercial-length hair, adding layers around the face will give you an instantly updated look.

KIM'S natural movement is the basis for Chenka Garcia's sleek look.

"Even wavy hair can be styled into a bob," Lake noted. "Ever-styling products would be important."

So to yourself salon looks in the idea behind Cesare Ilili's new bangs for its new styling line, of which Lake is the spokesperson. He collaborated with top local stylists, Cherry Reyes (Rustan Kwik Gayl, Angelo Justin (Rustan Salon), Ronald de la Peña (French Provost) and Jeremy Escalona (Salon de Manila) to form Ministry of Style, which encourages Filipinas to achieve fresh salon looks with the use of the brand's styling aide texture volume with Uto Flo, Kink-Free looks with Instant Straight, smooth before for a sleek wave, or Euro Control for unruly tresses. Cesare Ilili is a Unilever brand specially formulated for Filipinas.

"We noticed something that would speak to Filipinas, and that's Hollywood," brand manager Dorothy Ong explained. "It's a fusion that Steven's very good looking," she added of Lake, who has worked with Renee Zellweger, Catherine Zeta-Jones and, his personal favorites, Brooke Burke.

Major break

Lake has been cutting hair since he was 19. After college he moved to Los Angeles, California, where he started making a name as a backup artist to top stylists by day and modeling jobs, as well as producing fashion shows.

Lake's first major break came when a friend who was photographer Denis Nona Flisanil, impressed by Lake's handiwork on another friend, asked him to style the ghoul's crazy shoot. The rest girl's association Christina Aguil.

"There's no difference between styling a celebrity and a non-celebrity," Lake stressed. "All women want the same thing, and that's to look beautiful."

"I love that Filipinas are not afraid to experiment when it comes to their hairstyle," he observed. "It's hard to generalize. I've seen some who are very fashion-forward. But I really like it when a client is willing to try a new look, that's the ideal client for me. Some are apprehensive when you suggest a new cut, and they don't realize how good it looks on them until they see the finished result or when colleagues tell them how."

Lake prepared various beware and cautions to give depth to Filipinas' naturally black hair. Go for highlights, he added, instead of coloring the entire head with one shade. Highlights, he explained, look better on the hair grows out. "There's none or little evidence that root showing as your hair grows. It looks subtler."

SHAMPOO-COMMERCIAL-LENGTH hair, like Paolo Contis's, can get an instant update from wispy bangs and layers around the face.

Salon vs drugstore brands

Lake also said drugstore and supermarket brands aren't always inferior to salon brands.

"Salon products aren't always better. They have basically the same formulations as drugstore brands. The only advantage of going to the pros is in the application. A professional's cut can color or tone up your hair, and knowing it takes to achieve that color. If you do it on your own you could make a mistake and end up spending more to correct it. A pro can also do highlights, you can't do it on your own."

He also advised alternating shampoos. "Use half of the bottle, then pick that bottle and use another one. Go halfway then rotate with the first bottle."

The rationale? "It's like doing so exercise. If you're using the same muscles, you don't get the full benefit of your workout. The same applies to hair."

Creative Valentine gift ideas

THIERRY MUGLER'S Angel has remained a Top 10 bestseller in fragrances worldwide since its launch in 1993. His newest line called Angel Garden of Stars has incorporated a flower blended in the four fragrance variants with the famous Angel scent.

Each of the four flowers has a special reason for being chosen—rose means, What could of course is what goes with the woman's body chemistry, not what image she wishes to project, so try it on your skin and sniff after an hour or two before buying. One other hint is to know it.

Lily At first glance this flower looks very elegant, classic and pure, but when you look at it from a bird's eye view, it means. Into a woman's body. Touch it and it feels like honeysuckle scent of nature. The scent reminded me of honey and cinnamon on baking bread.

Violet. This tiny flower grows in the shade and looks timid and unassuming. Its fragrance though fills the whole room and lingers. The rich purple color in the flower of petals—moving. This is what I like about the original Angel, but has a powdery note that makes the aroma lighter.

Peony The most beautiful and striking of all the four flowers, it smells not like a supermodel on a month of shopping. The scent is very fragile and fleeting that you have to stand pretty close to smell it. My friend Heidi said it best: "Smells like a manufacturing company."

Rose. Looks fragile, delicate and helpless, but under a gush for it and its hearth, coarse thorns will draw blood. Has a grassy note! Citrus, roses and a chocolate note makes a happy 'adventure' May appeal to those who have come from the empty chocolate those who love the traditional English rose aroma.

Thierry Mugler fragrances are exclusively available at Rustan's Department store.

Lighter scents

Those who prefer fresher and lighter scents that Lea should check out Cristeve & Evelyn's new fragrances Lea and Pastel at P2,500 each.

Lea comes in a blue bottle and has an aquatic and relaxing scent with notes of sea spray, peach, ginger flower and orange blossom.

Pastel, in a pink bottle, has the exuberant and energizing smell of pink grapefruit, rosemary, sage and cassis tea.

I particularly love the solid perfume version of each scent that has a sleek silver cylinder the size of your lipstick. You can fit it into any bag, to give that a shimmer whenever applied. I went wild on the shoulders, décolletage and back with Pastel solid and I smelled pink grapefruit and sugar all the time. The best part? It's shimmer that bottle as it oozes only P1,200.

If you need a loved one see due for a beauty treatment or are just rude, take advantage of the promo or any of the Bride Choice that runs for the entire month of February. Come in for the rates treatment and both of you will get 15 percent off.

Take note though that you should know the treatment or the entire day in order. It is not valid if you just accompany someone. It has to be the same treatment both of you getting facials, laser hair removal, power peels, etc on the same day.

The promo does not cover surgery. Perfume and therefore, though.

If you do not have a spouse or partner, you may take along a parent, sibling, child or best friend. After all, love is not exclusive to couples! Call 8442059 to inquire if the treatment of your choice is included.

If your guy has a shabby face and it bugs him, I discovered a stylist that has a gift for giving guys the illusion of a dramatic face via a haircut. This can actually be the practical Valentine gift you can give him.

Anthony Villadolid of Fellow-ship salon on a guy's hair and made him look like he just a good 20 pounds. The cut was clean and short for business meetings or school, but also trendy enough for fun nights out or casual weekends.

He is also a licensed Eleval Professional Color Expert like his fellow senior stylist Jay Ballesteros. A haircut costs P500 for men and P650 for women, unlike most senior stylists that charge from P800 and up.

You can have them pick a color that will flatter your skin tone naturally or bring a picture and they can match it for you. Call 892 1574 or 8185401.

ANGEL Garden of Stars Rose

CRABTREE & Evelyn Pastel, P2,500

CRABTREE & Evelyn Lea—aquatic

FOUND Solid perfume, P1,200

L&F Violet and Peony

Face as accessories

From page 61

on-side that normally celebrates curiosity and a confident fashion sense.

One good thing to know though, is how to make accessories such as neck pieces and earrings work with the makeup we use. To educate myself more on this, I asked Cindy Hutchin to lend me some pieces for her made, and her Paradise of Bird Head makeup to do a beauty shoot that we all can learn from.

If there's anything I learned from the shoot, it is balance, balance, balance.

Since Cathy's pieces were big and dramatic, Len chose to just play up one feature and basically go for nude on the rest. For this shoot, he chose to make the eyes, which made everything else look glamorous and yet not overdone. He did mention that playing up your lips won't be a problem at all. All you have to do is stick to nudes or a light shade of blush, curl your lashes and add mascara.

When it comes to hair, if you feel you are wearing a great piece of accessory and have already applied the right makeup, keep your hairstyle clean and sleek. You don't want too many things cluttering your look.

"Truth is, beauty is all about simplicity and also fun and daring. If you don't take the time to find your best features, you'll never achieve what we work on. So go ahead and discover your best assets!"

Photos: Frank
Styling: Ria Francisco-Prieto
Makeup: Len Posadas
for Bird Head Cosmetics
Hair: Brown Sauce for Bird Head

HAIR: Exotic with metallic eyes

KELLY: Minimum smoky eyes

Teeth don't touch

The habit of clenching and night grinding (or bruxism) is bad for the teeth, muscles and jaw

By Dr. Olivia Francisco
Contributor

ACTRESS Sarah Harrison and her million-dollar smile

TEETH SHOULDN'T TOUCH when relaxed.

It's so simple. When reading, drawing, shopping, watching a movie, socializing, sleeping and, just as often as possible, remember: "Lips together, teeth apart."

This is important to follow because, for adults, the habit of clenching and nightgrinding (or bruxism) or both for the teeth, muscles and jaw.

Once upon a time when our permanent teeth were all born, our teeth fit so nicely together that night grinding was our body's way of relaxing our teeth into a more suitable bite. Parents should not have to worry if their child grinds at night, even if this noise makes the entire household. As the child matures, night grinding is usually outgrown. Any potential damage will show up in regular dental checkups.

For adults, clenching and grinding may be a way of dealing with everyday stress, anxiety or nervousness. The problem is, we are actually chewing up our teeth! This habit will eventually cause your teeth to fracture. Over the years it can wear away tooth enamel (the protective outer layer of tooth).

Losing this enamel can lead to sensitivity, tooth decay and even cause expensive fillings to pop out of place. Our main tooth ground is practically half its normal height! Microscopically, some don't feel any discomfort at all. This is because our body has a way of adjusting and protecting itself in ways we do not notice. We subject to the chronic "nothing away" of our teeth we are slowly actually. And the change, but in the long run this a not good at all.

Those people who grind should otherwise not be surprised as well if they have toothaches or jaw pain for no apparent reason. A patient who is clenching or grinding subjects his teeth to unnatural pressure. And since a tooth has nerve material, the nerve can get inflamed inside the tooth.

Finally, clenching and grinding a among on the muscles and bone as well. Hyperactivity can cause muscles around the jaw and the sides of the skull to enlarge. Overuse can also cause tenderness, spasm and pain. Oftentimes, you will feel tired in the jaw area and may experience headaches due to overstrained chewing muscles. Many also develop jaw problems.

The so-called "toothbrush abrasion" along the gum line of teeth could possibly be caused by something else other than rough incorrect brushing. Ground from side to side, teeth may melt at a point where there is brushing just over the gums. This is called abfraction, which can be caused by either faulty brushing or grinding.

If you know you grind your teeth or if your dentist suspects you do, what you desperately need is a night guard. It's a very conservative approach to prevent your teeth from chewing itself. The idea is for the night guard to wear out in place of your teeth, relieving yourself of tension in your clenching. As the night guard is custom-made it will customize.

And if clenching is a habit, remind yourself to give your jaw a break. Let it hang. Lips together, teeth apart. Because most of the time, teeth don't touch!

The author holds clinic at The Dental Place at Corinthian Plaza building [across Greenbelt 1 and Asian Institute of Management], Paseo de Roxas, Makati. Call 8128893 or e-mail thedentalplaceoc@yahoo.com.

VMV HYPOALLERGENICS

Fresh Samplers

MANILA — January 30, 2007

We make so many great products for skin that selection can be daunting. To help you navigate through our prodigious collection, we'll be offering Samples: Fresh From Our LaboratoriesTM AT VMV Skin Specialist Boutiques for no required purchase – our samples are your reward just for stopping by.

Our aim is to give you the most skindulgent experience possible at VMV. This February, we will be giving out a complete regimen of vials for your qualified purchase. Among the most sought after regimens, **Illuminate Active 10, Multi-Level Advanced Skin Lightening and Hyperpigmentation Therapy** and the **Glykeron Micro Dermabrasion Cellular Revitalization Anti-Senescence Therapy** will be available at the VMV Skin Specialist Boutiques.

Visit us at any of the following Boutiques: 2F Lifestyle Section PowerPlant, Rockwell; 3F West Wing Robinson's Galleria; UG Floor Galeria de Cuba Alabang Town Center. Our well-trained Beauty Consultants and Therapists will be happy to assist you.

Belo Awarded for Most Thermage Cases Worldwide

On Her: Triumph Panty Bra and Panty / On Him: Walker Sueds and Glow in the Dark Brief

Robinsons Department Store 'Strips Off' Prices on Select Undergarments with its UNDERWEAR FAIR

Ongoing until February 28, the "Underwear Fair" will be taking shoppers by storm and treat them to great underwear finds. From the basic boxers for him to mix-and-match panties and bras for her, everyone will surely find something to fit their lifestyle and personality. If you're in for some playful fun, there are checkered boxers and colorful T-shirt bra and panty ensembles. And if your man craves comfort, he will definitely love the basic round neck shirts and bikini briefs; while girls will surely go for the bra and panty set in nude. Robinsons Department Store features a wide array of undergarments for men and women – from hip panties and bras to classic briefs – all suited for cool pleasure. Remember, underwear has become more than just the first thing you put on and the last thing you take off, it has evolved as one of the most important things you wear all day! Choose your undergarments carefully and wear them proudly. Drop by and enjoy the price strip off of up to 50% at the "Underwear Fair" in all Robinsons Department Store branches now!

On Her: Bartizon Nude Bra and Panty with Lace and Embroidery / On Him: Jockey Comfort Stretch Round Neck Shirt and String Bikini

On Her: Bartizon Black Bra and Panty / On Him: Hartford Sport Knitted Boxer

On Her: Triumph Light Green T-Shirt Bra and Panty / On Him: Hanes Checkered Boxer

LIFESTYLE

70 years of Pinay power

By Alice T. Magaya

HOW DID HAVE FILIPINO women gone since they won the right to decide their future almost 70 years ago? This doesn't come as a timely question given that local elections are a mere three months away.

On Sept. 17, 1937, then President Manuel Quezon signed into law the women's version of the Women's Suffrage Act granting females the right to vote.

That's no inspired to go for, said Julie Benedicto, president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs Foundation. In fact, in some respects they've gone further than their forebears since for being instrumental in electing two women presidents in succession.

"But there's still a lot of work to be done," said Benedicto. "For one, women shouldn't be discriminated against in the workplace. Their right as well as their duty doesn't end after casting their votes. They should also involve themselves in guarding them."

The foundation also goes back a long way since its forerunner, the National Federation of Women's Clubs (NFWCP), was tasked by Quezon to gather at least 300,000 signatures from women all over the country to support the suffrage law. In effect, the clubs also drum around for its nine(70) years.

To mark the jubilee year of women suffrage, NFWCP is organizing a series of events to promote women's concerns. The series will culminate in a grand celebration at the Philippine International Convention Center sometime in September.

One such event is "Filipina Filipina," a fashion show on Feb. 16, 7 p.m., at the Manila Hotel's Finna Pavilion featuring the works of 16 local designers such as Ben Farinda, Dale Tenorio, Rajo Ralion, Steve de Leon, Randy Ortiz, JC Buenvila, Edgar Madrinan, Philip Rodriguez and Jon Escaño, to name a few.

Renowned parties may call Dr. Lily Soriano at 4635955 or Cely at 3320002, 3956Cellow.)

Ramos, one of the country's prime exponents of indigenous fabrics, is program coordinator. He said director Orgie Aura have come up with five eras or periods as backdrops for the designers' works.

All in all, these periods Spanish's turn of the century, American, Commonwealth, postwar journey, 1960s (millennium) upto the height and breadth of Filipino women's struggles to be heard and take an active part in shaping the country's future.

And what self-determination is a outfit's more struggle, Ramos said women's dress will be expected the timeline further by including fashion from the new millennium.

Each designer is assigned to dress up a minor from a particular period. Ramos, for instance, will do a Maria Clara-inspired gown in keeping with what was in vogue at the turn of the 20th century, while Ramos will come up with his version of drop-waist glamour that swept the Gatsby-era(roll) period.

Since the event also aims to rub up national pride, the designers have been encouraged to use a great deal of indigenous or locally produced fabrics such as pina, abaca, jusi and hand-woven silk, among other requisite materials.

'Elegance and decency'

As far as Benedicto is concerned, the show also aspires to promote "elegance and decency" as the way women dress. The foundation also wants to popularize indigenous fabrics to spur demand and help alleviate the plight of women who make them.

"The fashion will not be exact replicas of the dress available during a specific period," says Ramos. "Other wise, they would look like costumes. We've given designers the freedom to interpret fashion the way they see it. They're also free to use imported fabrics as long as they combine them with locally produced materials."

Ramos didn't even require his colleagues to limit somewhat only. His only request is that they make wearable and fairly elegant clothes. He's confident enough that some of them would dare cross the line separating the daring from the vulgar.

For some strange reason, however, male designers dominate what is supposedly an event to honor the achievements of women. Was a few of the designers think that fashion leaves no gender.

"It doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman," says Ramos, the youngest designer in the group. "My colleagues have been designing for women for quite a number of years and I think we know more about them than some women do. It doesn't matter as long as you know what women want."

Broadcast executive Elvira Benedicto, Julie's daughter, even ventures with us all the craft outside. "Majority of these designers can lay claim to fame, but they have been at it for quite some time. It was simply a matter of convenience, says Ramos. For some reason, it's easier to get a few from male designers than their female counterparts when it comes to group shows. Besides, he says, the local fashion biz is still hopelessly dominated by men.

But one need not be a fashionista to enjoy the show. Men will cop off such segments either with a song or dance number by Jed Madela, Gerardo Sotto and the Cuneta Sisters Dance Company.

The event will culminate in the awarding of prominent women achievers, such as Senator Sen. Rebecca Bendizo, La Union Mayor Mary Jane Ortega, Bataan Governor City Mayor Adelita Rodriguez, Rep. Cynthia Villar, media executive Wilfilar Gutierrez, Red Cross chair Rene Saud, Senora Julie and Margot Osmeña, among others.

Outgoing Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos, Lucena Lopez and Chito Santos-Garcia have also been cited as achievers. Oxford-educated their night achievers aren't allow them to personally receive their awards.

To make "Filipina Filipina" truly a celebration of women's fashion, each of the women achiever will be dressed up by a particular designer. Although not necessarily dominated by women, fashion will always be primarily for women.

E-mail the author at amt@magaya@inquirer.com.ph

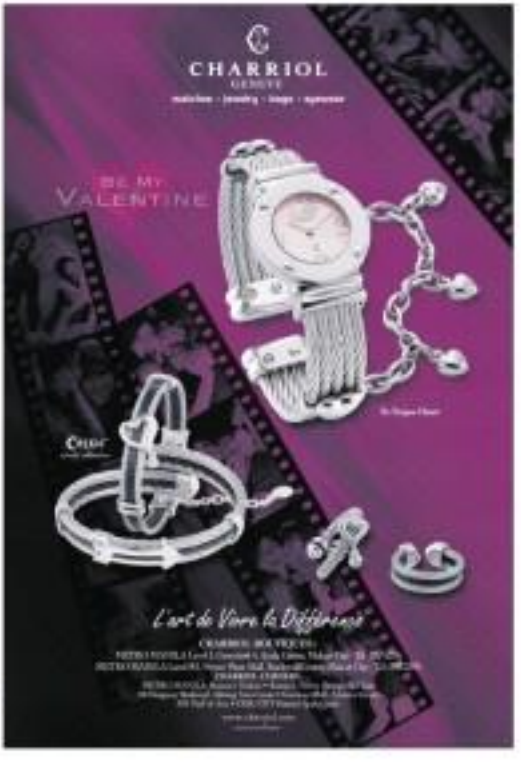
Baddeo, Sandico-Ong join Baguio *Fashion Expo*

THE FIRST-EVER BAGUIO Fashion Expo will showcase the collections of the city's local designers namely Cynthia Tolosa-Fuentes, Chin Deliña, Nine Cruz, Joey Samuel and Narda Cayanes, feb. 10-11, at the Baguio Country Club and Old City Baguio.

Manila-based designers Eddie Backhiro and Chin Sandico-Ong are joining the fashion exhibition, one of many projects being organized by the City of Pines to fit efforts to modernize as more.

The Baguio fashion expo is being presented by Project Play Productions headed by Harold C. Dominguez.

Over all, direction is by Raymund Villanueva. Call or text 09193426636 and 0928 2173326.



WOMEN adding up to exciting locale wear their colorful national dress at the Palace where the kings of Nepal are crowned.

OUR GRADS Posing with new friends at Dwarika's Hotel. Pepper Trebuchon (FAL's brilliant Desi Mentor, Tia's Darling, Lara Bartin Cuenca (seated on)

MAGNIFICENT bell at the iconic temple of Kumari Devi

FLOWER offerings for the success-be-crowned version of a loved one

BRASS and copper vases at a Boutique

GOLDEN tower of one of the palaces at Patan Durbar Square

GIGANTIC prayer wheel

Discovering my own Shangri-La

Arijith Sharma, Shiva Travels managing director, who arranged our stay in Nepal

THIS WAS MY FIRST EXCITING trip to an overseas destination, Nepal, and it had to be on our pal, Philippine Airlines, to make that dream come true. PAL was launching its fantastic Swingaround flights all over Asia, with some partners airlines.

In our super interesting Swingaround Kathmandu Package, we took the Royal Nepal Airlines from Hong Kong, but any other starting route for a day in the shopping city.

Third stop was for an excellent lunch at the grandiose Hong Kong Peninsula, dubbings, where we were treated to one of the best dim sum among the other occasions that the hotel offered. Then cityview of Chi Lantay Chung took us to the Hall of the gorgeously restored rooms of the Pen Ahwasad, we dropped till most of the shops closed and we hit our bed at 12 midnight.

Bright and early in the morning, we were off to the airport to catch our flight to Kathmandu with Nepal Airlines.

After a short four-hour trip, there they were, the great Himalayan mountains, bright and clear with their snowy peaks. As we got closer to landing, the pilot announced: "To your right is Mount Everest."

Needless to say, our faces were glued to the windows of the plane till we landed.

Once our group was out of immigration, we had to push myself: "Arise! I'm actually here, to my Grandma!." I thought aloud, with our group echoing the same opinion, dubbings.

Exotic

Welcome to the spectacular Kathmandu of Nepal. It is the most happening capital town of dominating the country with a difference, where the rhythm of life is elegantly slow and the way of life is traditional and accomplished.

This capital of the kingdom is definitely a poignant treasure house of ancient art, ancient temples, covers of which are listed in the Unesco's "World Heritage Monuments List," and palaces, shrines, squares, courtyards — a fairytale land of kings and queens!

On the first stop was the awesome Dwarika's Hotel, Kathmandu. (Although it is not included in the Swingaround packages, it's hotel one must visit in Nepal, anyway.

Its elegance, impeccable service can an architectural feat in itself, dubbings. Blended into the rooms, windows, walls, door frames and other features are hundreds of time-old exquisite carvings, painstakingly restored by superbly trained wood carvers.

Once settled in our rooms we were off to our first interesting sight, the Patan Durbar Square.

Situated in the heart of the ancient city of Patan, this enormous square is full of ancient palaces, temples and shrines. It is renowned for its exquisite wood and stone carvings, all found in the three main durbar squares.

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak EasyShare

But the mind-boggling sight is the Standard Durbar, which holds in the center a masterpiece of stone architecture, the Royal Bath, called Sundhara.

Another fantastic sight is Krishna Mandir Temple, built in 1637. It is the only temple of Lord Krishna, having 21 stones completely made of stone.

Ish then drove over to the picturesque landscape of Bhaktapur and dined at the quaint outdoor mill to Patan Durbar.

Our group, with the help of our guide, dug into the yummy variety of Nepalese dishes, and decided to eat every order we had. It was that good (and inexpensive) we couldn't be sure.

Great temples

Next, we were off to visit another World Heritage monument, the Pashupatinath Temple, situated 5 km out of Kathmandu. This is the temple of Lord Shiva that has a gold-covered golden roof and silver doors, considered one of the holiest destinies for Hindus.

Only Hindus are allowed inside the temple, but we could clearly see all the activities taking place, like the cremation done by the Bagmati River. It was a shocking and eye and

2nd Zobel polo cup on Sunday

GOINGS ON

VISAYAS GOODS PROMOTE THE SUGBUHAN Enrique Zobel Memorial Polo Cup Feb. 11, 2 p.m., at the Manila Polo Club. The Zobel Cup featured the country's finest polo players, sports enthusiasts, as well as visiting players from Cebu and Spain, in support of the Enrique Zobel Foundation, that has been a special love cultivated by the Enrique Zobel Collection. Part of the proceeds from every purchase of items in the Zobel line goes to the foundation's projects for underprivileged members of society. The special collection is available at all five Rustan boutiques including shopping malls.

VALENTINE TREATS. Visitors of Rustan's Center in Alabang are getting Valentine treats. A string quartet will serenade diners at Cal del Sol Feb. 13 while wines dressed in traditional French costumes will be giving out bonbons. Icons de Relief Mandirie will present a Valentine concert Feb. 12, 7 p.m.

To welcome the year of the fire boar on Feb. 18, the White Tiger Wushu Chen Fu Group will present the traditional Lion Dragon Dance 4-5 p.m. Westgate Alabang is at the west Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City; tel. 8405578 and 8405510, website www.amigosenlinea.com.

SUMMER IN INTERLUDES. Festival Supremo will present Sofia's Bossa Nova rendezvous Feb. 11, and Sublime Feb. 18, 3 p.m., at the Concert Court. The Lagoon String Quartet serenades couples Feb. 14 at Chef's Avenue. A pre-Valentine compatibility test and numerology will be held Feb. 11, 3-5 p.m., at the Concert Court. Festival Supremo is at Ritzwell Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa; tel. 8405010.

FESTIVAL. The New Zealand Festival will be held Feb. 9-11 at Rio Palace. The three-day fair and exhibit will highlight the best of New Zealand, including its products. Other festival events include a face painting session on Maori symbols Feb. 10-11, 1-4 p.m.; culinary demo by Fonterra at Living Well Feb. 10, 3 p.m.; and a cultural performance by Manobalan Feb. 10, 4 p.m.

LECTURE. National Artist and Ramon Magsaysay laureate Bienvenido Lumbera will deliver the 2006 Dr. Teodoro Moro Lecture of the Faculty of Arts and Letters of the University of Santo Tomas, 7 p.m. today at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex on Dapitan, UST campus, Lopez, Manila. He will lecture about the writing of history. The session will also be UST's testimonial to Lumbera for becoming the newest National Artist for Literature. Lumbera finished his M.A. Journalism in the mid-'50s? faculty of Philosophy and Letters, forerunner of today's Arts and Letters, and was author of the Varsitarian, the official student paper of UST.

WELLNESS FEST. The Psychic and Wellness Festival will be held Feb. 14-18, 9 a.m.-9 p.m., at Studio 7 Place (tel. 2/1/1/2/3), 6th Eldorado building, Legaspi Lopez Drive, South Triangle, QC. Free lectures and demonstrations on psychic healing, Reiki, energization therapy, natural beauty care, food supplements and other holistic healing services will be conducted.

SEMINAR. The Philippine Society of Librarians and Information Specialists, with the Integrated Society of Information Professionals, will hold a seminar-workshop on "Trends and Challenges in Indexing, Cataloging and Abstracting" Feb. 22-24 at the Conference Plaza Hotel, Roxas Blvd. cor. Jose Rizal, Baguio City. Call 2/2/1/3/4, 5/2/1/3/6/1, 8/8/1/2/3/2 and 8/8/1/4/8/3/5.

SEMINAR. The Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will conduct a seminar on Effective Selling Skills today at Balmoral Room B, 2/F PTTC Building, Gen. Gil Puyat Ave., cor. Roxas Blvd., Pasay City; tel. 8/3/1/3/4/4-48 or 8/3/1/8/8/5.

UK FEST. British Council Philippines will host the annual Edinburgh Uk Fair Feb. 23-24, 2-7 p.m., at the Karos Piazza of Glorietta 2 Shangri-La Hotel. The council's website is www.britishcouncil.org.ph, tel. 8/1/4/3/1/1-11.

PERFORMANCE. Susan Fernandez is the featured performer of Pace Park Presents, 7 p.m. today. The show, "Romantic Musical," is part of the celebrations of Buwan Ng Wika this February. The repertoire will include a few Filipiniana love songs. Fernandez is a singer, teacher and actress, will accompany herself on the guitar. Pace Park Presents is open to the public. Admission is free.

PROMO WINNER. Ms. Lourdes Alcantara of Mandaluyong City won a brand-new Mercedes Benz B-Class in the recent Bring Home Mercedes raffle promo. Consolation prize winners were: Imelda G. Salvador, Grace M. Jacala, Teodorico T. Salazar, Rolla S. Tenaa and Arnaldo B. Pabroa.

CONFERENCES. Professor Kaori Ikeuchi of Kansai University in Osaka, Japan, will speak on "Japanese Studies in the Philippines" at the Asian Center, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, 3 p.m. today. Ikeuchi is a visiting professor at the UP Asian Center. Her lecture is open to the public.

Introducing. Skin Savvy 60.
Ultra-High Protection, Creamy Perfection
Liquid-Crème Foundation

Skin-Lightening. Full-Spectrum. SPF 60.

Ultra-high protection and creamy perfection in one oh-so-smart, simple step. This is our best-selling Avocado 60 Skin-Lightening, Full-Spectrum Indoor-Outdoor Sun + Light Screen in a beautifully-tinted foundation. Full-coverage yet lightweight for an up-close-touch-it-perfect finish. Protects against indoor and outdoor UVA, UVB, Infrared and Visible Light. Prevents skin cancer, hyperpigmentation, and photoaging. Protection so shrewd, regular use enables overall skin tone to lighten naturally. Packed with antioxidants yet free of allergens, cosmetogens, PABA, and preservatives. We've taken care of the science in the tube. Now all you need to do is pick this clever little number as your multi-squeeze, and bask in your blemish-free beauty.

VMV HYPOALLERGENICS

LIFE-STYLED
Thelma Sioson San Juan

Surrendering to laser, finally

In a week or so after my Fraxel treatment, my skin was smooth, even-toned, finer

WAITING ABOUT IT IS ONE thing, exhorting yourself to it is another.

As "it" I mean lipo, botox, microdermabrasy or anything in the ever-expanding menu of beauty and slimming treatments. I'm scared to try it. Let's big yourself be inspired into a modest foray and not taken more amount of daring, if not courage. And I'm not known to be overcome this either.

Then in one grim and creeper Bulgari climax, Vicki Belo, especially VICE, GOP-hellion Belo was in the room to coax me that it's about time I tried Fraxel, or, more obscure as a call personified. Thwaaap: the non-invasive facelift many women are raving. I wasn't ready to commit to a facelift in a clinical sense, not because half of Manila's mall society was transshopping, but because I'm in a state of denial about such severe stuff as age and maturity, because I'm not fond of knives—especially if they're poked into my back or on my face.

But Cheu this Fraxel might not be a bad idea. It's a non-invasive, laser treatment, and laser fear became part and parcel—quite literally—of the images of mechanical claw from the X-men movie. Because I'm not fond of knives—especially if they're poked into my back or on my face.

Pitchfork and blowtube aren't my problem; big pores and pimple scars are. See that one's pores and pimple scars are supposed to be a public issue affecting my readers' lives, but, I believe, duty to elicit the evolution of beauty treatment and skincare in this country. (Woe on earth did we get to that?)

The development of beauty cosmetic procedures and skincare in the country has galloped in the last few years. You can't compare it to what it was a decade ago. Today there's Belo and all these established pros state-of-the-art technology from undetectable to invasive.

Today, gifts and gyps in their "source" go to a "clinic" shaped at their clue of pastel-colored walls, cute receptionists (the gold-mottled outfits), and we didn't have to worry "dress" to those from.

My skincare must be representative of that of many men and women in the country. Mommy would wake me up way before it is the morning, as we could become the first to sign up in the day's registry of "Mrs. Uy" then "doctor" (she was in) is that "clinic" (the source) is the residence of many of us.

An appointment with her was priced. Long before came the queues began in front of that huge building on Edsa. And when you did get treated, you were given a variety of creams. Mommy's grocery. Then went by her. As he came—I became her only the pricking and my red face after that.

To make ancient history short, says reveals from such collation into skincare. "Traditional peeling didn't quite work. Before Fraxel, the only procedure I had was the power peel and the popular IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) Rejuvenation.

Microthermal treatment

Approved by the FDA, Fraxel, then latest beauty editor Mel Cuevas wrote, is like doing a "Photoshop" of your face.

Fraxel (for fractora) produces thousands of deep, tiny columns of light-treated areas of your face. Each zone is subjected to microthermal treatments—one small area at a time, pixel by pixel, like in Photoshop. As its name indicates, it's a fractional rejuvenation.

This gradual, focused-treatment application of Laser is for skin where you to heal faster. Which means not much downtime needed other your treatment, and no scarring. It's also a modern option you to make skin softer and tighter, less oily—and, I was promised, reduce the pores.

Armed with this background info, I went to the Belo Clinic at Medical Plaza. I was ushered to a room where an assistant, whom I did get treated, was soon get up

ENTERTAINME

Editor Brenda G. Velarde

Ryan still hurts over split from Reese

... plus, songs of Sharon, Kuh & Anthony are played in Kirk Douglas Theatre, LA

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rebecca V. Sipin

LOS ANGELES—"WHAT IS ON MY mind right now is the heartache and my children, but I'll persevere," Ryan Phillippe said of his separation from Reese Witherspoon in a recent press conference at the Four Seasons Hotel.

Ryan was speaking to journalists to promote

STORY ON P.

RYAN Phillippe: "This is the most difficult time in my life."

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABAÑA

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY — BY PH. JUNIOR

MUTTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

LOVEBONDS — BY ELIZABETH CHEINGELO

ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LYN GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN MANLANG

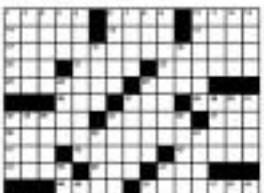
BIRD MACHINE — BY MANIX ABRERA

HUMORSOSYOSO — BY JOHNO TUJOO

TULOOK — BY PAPI LIMO TATUM PALAMBELING

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By James E. Bush
Edgewater, FL

ACROSS
1 Wide open
6 Boot holder
10 Hero's lot: Var.
14 Stir-fry pans
15 Lasting trig
16 Low-level
17 Famous last words?
19 Reverse polarity
20 Italian Fiction Ellis
21 Statutorily pretty
22 Democratic rejects
23 Skater's defense
25 Too discreet
27 Coming-up
28 Explosive experiment
29 Perky Pippi actor
31 Indispensible element
37 Kid's comment
38 Famous last words?
41 Money-making
43 Crackle bed, e.g.
44 Wish in vain
45 Bread with cutlets in soup
46 Death monger
47 Pepper's sweet
48 Rubik's wizard
50 Water sound
51 Ski
52 Money launch
56 Pugilistic org.
59 Famous last words?
62 Contents of "El Niño"
63 Medical neighbor
64 Loving different?
65 Overblown
66 Greatest ever
67 All-inclusive

DOWN
1 Rust all over
2 Analytic prof.
3 Spelling of Ty
4 Chief rope
5 Mornings-evening link
6 Bitter taste
7 Adam of "Batman"
8 Curvy sequence
9 Bargain
10 Southern hog
11 Lines of "Chocolate"
12 Operate video
13 High-morning
18 Comstock
24 Lao-Tzu's idea
26 Businessmen's lunch
28 Trump, Hughes
31 Management specialist
32 Merry moment
33 Host of Raffaella
34 Wrongdoing
35 Hefty slice
36 Shells of fallow
39 Millennium sight
40 Lose with
42 Soft drink
43 Regrouping portion, in space
45 Wimp removed
46 Tilings for a rocker
47 Heavyweight champ Mike
49 Shade of island
50 Authorized
51 Sending aside
53 Last words
54 Soft touch
55 Decrees
57 Rand's nosy
58 Fuddy-duddy
60 Ms. Merkel
61 Sad

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

THIS WEEK TODAY Many of you have colorful, active lives. Number six Virgo Taffeta—you're the hardest hit by Mercury's retrograde motion and forthcoming. You try hard (and succeed!) to be positive in the face of countless challenges. You're always dynamic and full of energy. Partnerships or relationships will be important for you this coming year. Focus on these.

BORDER-X (Miss Walter, author; Dumb King, singer; Thing Ten, artist)

BIRDS (March 21 to April 19): You are tempted to keep commitments made in the heat of spontaneity or spread too many wings. However, avoid the crowd and go somewhere alone whenever you're doing. (Fake smile.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your ability to get others with planet you today. People want to be around you. Everybody wants the mood to go somewhere ahead whatever they're doing. (Fake smile.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel very generous toward someone, and feelings are returned. Your positive judgment might not be correct. If you think you're going overboard about something, now probably are.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): It's unwise to let someone make decisions for you today. Avoid bad situations today because you might accomplish something today. It's okay to feel yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Others might be attracted to you today. Because of your tendency to be overconfident, you might not be very sensitive to how others feel today. Relax—it's okay to be a little insecure sometimes. It's very easy to misjudge things today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): If you have the feeling someone's not working hard enough, demands on you today, you don't have to respond. People are asking for the impossible!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Be careful about commitments or decisions you make today. It's easy to overstate more than you can do. Material possessions might be okay today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be very careful with financial agreements today. Things could look better than they actually are. Don't be overly concerned.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be careful when others ask you to do favors today. Be careful with all your financial transactions today. People are expecting more from you than it's worth. Don't be impatient.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be careful when dealing with people today. Sure, People are looking to promise you to do any deals. It's your best to stay realistic. Stand to your friends, but don't do the impossible.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today you'll be comfortable in the role. However, this is not a good day to hand money to your partnerships. Be careful who you pay for gifts for others. Now it doesn't do. It's like through that world.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel stupid and happy today. Be cautious. It's easy to say something you don't mean. Be careful about indicating or being misunderstood. (You know who you are.) Don't do anything that you're going to regret later.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

					3			
		7	2	5		6		
	6	2		4			5	
	1							4
	5	6		3		9	7	
4							8	
	3			8		4	1	
		5		7	1	8		
			9					

Difficulty Level ★★★★

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	1	2	7	3	5	6	9	4
9	3	5	4	6	8	1	2	7
6	4	7	2	1	9	3	5	8
3	6	8	1	4	2	5	7	9
7	9	4	5	8	6	2	3	1
2	5	1	3	9	7	8	4	6
4	7	6	8	2	3	9	1	5
5	8	3	9	7	1	4	6	2
1	2	9	6	5	4	7	8	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

RUSHES

Three stars on their Oscar nods

BEVERLY HILLS, California—Helen Mirren says voting for herself in this year's Oscars race was harder than anything she had to do while making "The Queen."

The British veteran, favorite to scoop the Best Actress trophy on Feb. 25, said she had thought twice about ticking her own box on the ballot papers.

"It's a terrible moment, an awful moral dilemma," Mirren, 61, told reporters ahead of the Oscars nominees luncheon on Monday.

FOREST WHITTAKER

Not a priest

Best actor contender Forest Whitaker said no personal morals shaped his bid to honor black actors should not be interpreted as a political statement against the academy Awards.

"It's about people being celebrated by a community ... not a priest or a statesmen," Whitaker said at the luncheon.

Whitaker was referring to a story in the latest Newsweek magazine, referring to a "career meeting" held by black stars in Hollywood to honor each other.

Whitaker—on course to become only the third African-American actor to win the Best Actor prize in 70 years for his portrayal of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland"—is one of a record five black actors nominated this year, along with Will Smith and Djimon Hounsou.

MARK WAHLBERG

Hard knocks

Mark Wahlberg said his crime-ridden formative years were behind his surprise Best Supporting Actor nomination for "The Departed."

Wahlberg plays a foul-mouthed Boston detective in the Martin Scorsese-directed crime drama. He said he had used the experience of several brushes with the law in his youth to get in to character.

The 'good news' made his parents cry, he added, recalling the 'row of them had to get on a train [since] we'd had no car with money they were going to use to buy food for their new kids." AFP

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GALLERIA

1 NIGHT at the MUSEUM • THX
2 THE HOLIDAY
3 indieBites: COMPOUND
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
5 HANNIBAL RISING
6 THE MESSENGERS
7 THE CLEANER
8 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
LITTLE CHILDREN
9 APOCALYPTO
10 CHARLOTTE'S WEB

ERMITA

1 THE HOLIDAY
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
3 HANNIBAL RISING
4 THE CLEANER
5 THE MESSENGERS
6 APOCALYPTO
7 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

METRO EAST

1 THE CLEANER
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 APOCALYPTO
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
6 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
7 HANNIBAL RISING
8 THE HOLIDAY

NOVALICHES

1 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 The CLEANER
5 APOCALYPTO

PIONEER

1 THE HOLIDAY
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
4 HANNIBAL RISING

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STA. ROSA

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2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
3 LITTLE CHILDREN
4 THE MESSENGERS

LIPA

1 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
2 TENACIOUS D
3 AGENT X44
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

DASMARINAS

1 THE MESSENGERS
2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE CURSE of THE GOLDEN FLOWER

ANGELES

1 APOCALYPTO
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 THE MESSENGERS
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

IMUS

1 APOCALYPTO
2 THE MESSENGERS
3 THE HOLIDAY
4 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
5 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

STARMILLS

1 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 AGENT X44
4 THE MESSENGERS
5 The CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
6 APOCALYPTO

BACOLOD

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 AGENT X44
6 TENACIOUS D

ILOILO

1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 AGENT X44
3 SPIRIT TRAP
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 BLOOD DIAMOND

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SHOWTIME
NOW SHOWING

Ryan still hurts over split …

From page B1

ONLY LAST YEAR. Ryan and Reese at the 2006 Academy Awards.

his new film "Smash," a dramatic thriller where he acts well opposite respected thespians Chris Cooper and Laura Linney.

Responding to a writer's question if it was fair to ask him about his pending divorce from the Oscar and Golden Globe-winning actress, Ryan said, "It's fair to ask, man, I wouldn't (bridge expletive) stuff but I would say, you know, it's up and down. It's the most difficult time in my life. I value what's at stake in my child, there's welfare and happiness so that's the priority right now."

Keep going

The actor added, "It's funny…how I am promoting a movie and people are saying, oh, his movie is great and his career is going well. It's the last thing on my mind right now. I love this movie, I love what I do … You want to talk about working with a great actor like Chris Cooper and what I think of his performance, but it's difficult."

The 32-year-old father of Ava, 7, and Deacon, 3, his kids with Reese, continued, "What is on my mind right now is the heartache and my children but I'll persevere. People get through it…you know. I'm certainly not the first, won't be the last and that doesn't make it any easier. But there are reasons to keep on going, right?"

On whether the media was fair in identifying Australian actress Abbie Cornish as his alleged partner in a reported affair that initiated Reese, the star of the Oscar-winning "Crash" and "Days of our Fathers" stated, "But that's all for us much of what is done in the media is not fair to any of us and it's really beyond our control. You can waste a lot of energy trying to counteract it or whatever it is that made you feel slighted but we really have no control over it. You sign up for this life to some degree. If you don't want it, there are ways to get out. It's not On Media. If you're done with it and you're tired of it, move on, be things like that as evident but it's just a part of this business."

Asked if an acting couple's relationship can be affected by competition (one of the reported reasons of his and Reese's estrangement), Ryan commented, "I can't speak for other people. I know that's not a part of who I am. I am not a competitive person and although I do have competitive drive, there are many things far more important in life is not these movies. So I guess I don't really feel like that applies to my life. I mean, I imagine people would put that sort of pressure and focus on Reese and my relationship but I was always proud of her success."

He claimed, "You get to understand, I have no real aspirations to be a giant in the industry. I like making movies. I really do and I want to tell cool stories and have people like my work but I don't have designs on making $25 million a picture. It's just not me and it's not really what I'm after. I just don't have that (competitive quality). That was the least of my problems."

Ryan and Reese, who have been married for seven years, were said to have been seen with Ava and Deacon at the former's school play. Some media reported that in the divorce papers filed by Reese, she requested for joint legal custody of the kids but asked for primary physical custody and sought to prevent Ryan from making spousal support.

Insider access

Ironically amid talks that Reese's former owner backed the couple's conflict, Ryan has received upcoming cameos where he has important starring roles. In "Wrench," a riveting film based on a true story that made headlines in 2000, he is likely to get good reviews as the young FBI agent. Also, O'Neill, who helped unmask FBI operative Robert Hanssen (Chris Cooper) in a double agent. Ryan has intense one-on-one scenes with the always-excellent Cooper and acquits himself.

Ryan also plays lawyer-unit Lauren Linney in his FBI boss who plants him as an undercover mole on Chris' character's espionage activities for the former Soviet Union. However, thanks in large part to Ryan's work, was found guilty of treason against the US in 2001, for espionage a life sentence as a result, must severely prison for selling valuable classified documents to Russia, including the identification of 50-60 agents who worked as spies against for the American government and the relocation plans for the US president in case of a major attack.

Ryan and Chris talked extensively with Eric, who was considered as all aspects of the production

New accent

In "Stop Loss," the actor portrays an Army sergeant who refuses to return to battle in Iraq despite the government ordering him to do so. It was reportedly on the set of this film that he had the idea of using a southern accent with his co-star, Mike.

Ryan takes on a Dutch accent in an upcoming movie to star a food chemist in Missouri but is kidnapped by a terrorist (Lawrence Fishburne) in "Fire Project."

Another, "Ghost," features him and James Smithson as cops chasing after an expert hack robber. Under a production firm he formed with his business partner, David Siegel, Ryan is set to produce the film adaptation of the novel "The White Boy Shuffle," which is described as a hip hop "Catcher in the Rye."

Mood music

Last weekend, Ryan was excited to walk into the Rick Douglas Theater Guild screening of the Joss Whedon (writer) and Joss Whedon (director) "Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog" and Anthony Castelo's "Substitute" before playing behind the performance of "Dragonetti" began. The songs were blasted, as the predominantly white audience filed in, to set the mood for Jessica Rappoport's play about Maida who the Rhetorics reigned.

E-mail the columnist at … or rappoport_2000@yahoo.com

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Paris taking Vienna by storm

VIENNA, AUSTRIA—HOTEL heiress and celebutante Paris Hilton is on the guest list for next week's elegant Opera Ball, the society event of the season, and her impending visit is the talk of the town—for all the wrong reasons.

Although hosts for the lavish, 127-year-old ball—the hottest ticket in Vienna—insist just a few weeks after she pleaded no contest to alcohol-related reckless driving.

"This makes a farce of the Opera Ball," staffer Barbara Krafft, a retired real estate agent who said she always looks forward to the annual affair in the Staats Opera House.

AP

DID YOU KNOW...

ARA MINA

I have two pets: Tiffany, a five-year-old Pug, and Kirby, a 11-month old Bichon Frise. Along with Precia, Tiffany is a pug-of-no-regard pet. Since I named them after superstar idols, Kirby, who is named after my favorite Hollywood actor Kirby Sutherland, is a hairy-ass gift from Greyhound i Pedo Rizalito. I buy special dog food for them—i.e. Royal Canin's Regimic for Tiffany and Science Diet for Kirby. Since I am always busy, I'm not about to say house for their regular checkups.

Reporter: Jun Pauge Jr.

Museum show in Kylie's honor

KYLIE MINOGUE

LONDON—ONE OF Britain's most remarkable museums on Tuesday staged the first show it has ever dedicated to a pop star—Kylie Minogue.

The Australian pop diva's costumes, corsets and other creations from stage and screen were draped across the halls of the Victoria and Albert Museum where admirers looking around his latest incarnation by Kylie them.

Minogue, 38, said the song her mother's Australia "tackle arts in music."

In a statement at the museum, Kylie pays tribute to her parents who followed her around on tour, ordering outfits from the dressing room after shows.

"Since it was his my parents ... that cul. he/she would be the site of a suitcase rather than an exhibition space." Reuters

JOLINA MAGDANGAL

Between takes, when I'm working, I read "Gianna: The Last Word" by Gianne Sassone, the late princess' therapist. Interesting to this book, I have more or just confided in Sassone everything; she also gave the same promise not to come out with a book so that people would get to know the real Diana. I admired Diana because she was very gentle and kind. She also had lots of charity projects. When I was in London, I visited Harrod's (Lover Diana and Dodi Fayed's statue, called "Innocence Victim."

Reporter: Jun Pauge Jr.

RED CARPET

The 59th Directors Guild of America Awards for film and TV last weekend in LA

KYRA SEDGWICK

JENNIFER Hudson and director Bill Condon

indieSine
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APRIENCE FERRERA

LESLIE SOMOSA

ENTERTAINMENT

Winners at the Golden Kamera Awards in Berlin, Feb. 1

PEACE Brosnan, for environmental commitment

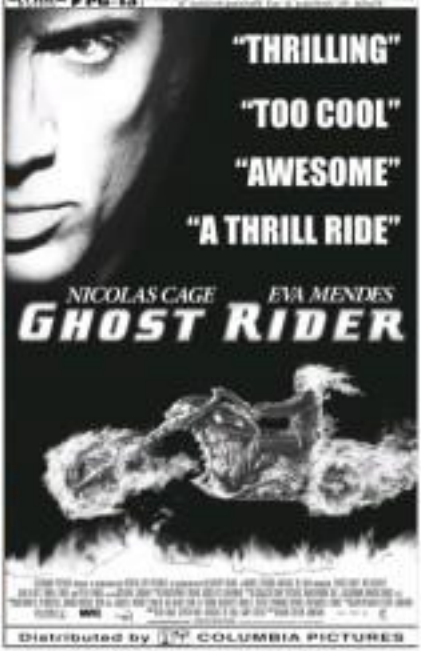
KATIE Holmes, Best International Solo Pop Artist

LIONEL Richie, for lifetime achievement

...and stunning panel, actress Ilka Nicolas

Marvel thrill ride begins FEB 14

IN TRUE ▶ FEB 14



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ARANETA CENTER

Gateway MALL FarmersPlaza

Gateway CINEMAS 1 to 10

THE HOLIDAY	HANNIBAL RISING	THE MESSENGERS	
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	BANDSLAM	CODENAME THE CLEANER	
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	APOCALYPTO	HOLLYWOODLAND	THE HOLIDAY

MALL 5

1	HANNIBAL RISING	2	THE MESSENGERS	3	APOCALYPTO
4	AGENT X-44	5	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER		

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AT THE CINEMAS

TRIX

G1	1 THE CLEANER	2 THE HOLIDAY	3 HANNIBAL RISING	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
G4	1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 HANNIBAL RISING	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	6 THE HOLIDAY	7 APOCALYPTO
GB1	1 APOCALYPTO	2 THE HOLIDAY		
GB3	1 THE MESSENGERS	2 THE HOLIDAY		
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS	4 HANNIBAL RISING	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	
ATC	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 HANNIBAL RISING		
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 APOCALYPTO	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER		
	3 THE CLEANER	4 HANNIBAL RISING	5 THE MESSENGERS	

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	TOWN CENTER
Chinese New Year Celebration with Porky Pig, February 9, 2007	Celebrate the sweet life at the Town this Valentine's at MYMP Live! February 10, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Philippine Arts Festival, February 15, 2007	Chinese New Year Celebration with Porky Pig, February 16, 2007

Greenbelt 5 Novak Peak presents: Collection of Ana Rivera

Christian's — Repertory Philippines presents SOUND & DANCE at REP's Onofre Theatre - February 9 to March 4, 2007

Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE EXHIBITION: Art Streams from the Mainland (via Hong) February 15 to March 27, 2007

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Cinema 2000 Alabang

CHICOSCI, left: Kamikazee's Jay Contreras and Parokya's Chino Miranda onstage.

Friends sing for Ely Buendia

By Pachalo Concepcion
Contributor

WEEKS BEFORE SUFfering a heart attack, Ely Buendia was said to be "depressed."

The 33-year-old former leader of the country's biggest and most influential band super trolls has released his limited run one night after a gig with his new group Pupil at Eastwood City in Libis, Quezon City. "Where have all my friends gone?"

Eastwood City would be the main venue of "LIVELY"—a family pregame[illegible] benefit for 20 to help Ely defray hospital bills and other medical expenses.

The organizers included former Bamboo front, manager Jolly Thomas, Shirley Aragon-Elgar (Bamboo's ex, now married to Rivermaya guitarist Mike Elgar), '70s Bistro manager Bonnel Bautista, MTV Philippines PR officer Lizelle Claudio, Edi of FM radio station 1FM/FM 89.9 and others who came together as concerned friends volunteering their services.

The multiday lineup consisted of Chicosci, Cinbad, Dicta Licious, Franzenfi, Itchyworms. Join the Club, Juliana, Kamikazee, Kitchie Nadal, Makiska, Moonstar 88, Operated, Parokya, Pedicab, re-Eight, Silverwaya, Slackerdaily, Salindiwa, Sponge Cola, Sweezy, True Faith and Up Dharma Down.

Former U-Turn lead guitarist Marcus Adoro made a surprise appearance as the last performer.

The bands played three songs each and then were drawn the stage to approach the Sunday crowd with donation buses.

Some P70,000 was raised, with the the artists themselves pledging funds.

Backstage, the vibe was relaxed. "Missing rock star? ," Bamboo observed. "Everybody is seeming parmody for where were to play."

A few talked about their relationship with Buendia and the U-Turn[illegible].

"To me he is a hero," Itchyworms vocalist-guitarist Jego Izquierdo said. "Not only did the Eraserheads influence my band's music; they even helped us secure our first chance in Ely's home studio. The U-heads also got us to open their gigs."

"We were pretty close in the 1990s and hung out a lot," Trust Faith front man Mesfayes Bautil recounted. "I know Ely's brothers and sisters because I lived in Parañaque which was near their place in Las Piñas. But recently I was a big fan, even when I was already with True Faith. I'm the type who would profess love for music that I admire. Ely's music was epic, very artistic."

ABS-CBN's Nicky Lee and Joyce Bernal were roaming around, consulting with volunteers and distributing the collection boxes.

Kamalayan ko si Ely noong nagsimula pa ito as UP[illegible] Lee explained. "Nakasama ko siya ... sa pagsagip Umawan. Alam[illegible] ko ang ... Ely noon kung ano talaga ang gusto niyang gawin at dami ng talent niya.

Kitsolo ko siyang assistant, taga-research, kasama sa sesahodnyo ko at bahay. I remember gusto niyang gumawa ng unang[illegible] demo songs[illegible] ... wala pang pamagsasama. Ako[illegible] alam ko[illegible] siyang[illegible] ito at[illegible] ... thrilled ngo[illegible] engineers yan ng video game, sobrang artistic."

According to Franzmil, Buendia was playing[illegible] an evening[illegible] games, when he first felt chest pains while on the road to a Pupil gig in Laguna.

However, friends believe the heart attack was the result of a buildup of stress from more serious physical and emotional factors.

What could have caused the outburst in Eastwood?

One cheery[illegible] involves an incident where Diane Manuel, Ely's live-in partner and one of two managers, allegedly dressed some on the owner of Big Sky Mind, an ex-girlfriend[illegible] joint in Quezon City which led to the banning of Pupil from the establishment.

At the fundraiser, some of the participating bands were said to have made one request: that Worries should not be[illegible] ... Also, it looks like Buendia still has to mend some fences, especially with his former band mates.

There was talk that U-Heads drummer, now Gandasch[illegible]

ELY Buendia, with a rare smile on his lips in this file photo.

BITTERSWEET: Nadia does her share, with guitar.

FORMER U-heads guitarist Marcus Adoro concludes the program.

FILM director Joyce Bernal and scriptwriter Ricky Lee, Ely's fellow movie enthusiasts.

Franzmil is holding his own fundraiser for Ely on Feb. 24 at Embob, Timog, Quezon City featuring various artists. Meanwhile, Ely himself is slated to perform Feb. 25 at Star Hall in Las Piñas to raise funds...for realsies?

KC HONSTEAD goes around with a coffee mug.

LEONARDO DiCaprio, right, and Mark Wahlberg, below.

RINKO KIKUCHI ... JENNIFER HUDSON ... HELEN MIRREN ...

Oscar nominees meet for lunch

ABIGAIL BRESLIN ...

CLINT EASTWOOD ...

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA—A CONSTELlation of Oscar-nominated stars gathered Monday for an informal get-together ahead of the biggest cinematic awards show in the world later this month.

Seven-eight-time Oscar nominated 34-year-old Penny O'Toole to 10-year-old Abra Grace Abigail Breslin, around 140 nominees were on hand for the annual nominees luncheon at a luxury beverly-hills hotel.

Organizers issued a friendly reminder to Hollywood's assembled great to keep their acceptance speeches at the 9th, 23 each[illegible] ra short, sweet—and not boring.

"The success of the show depends on you," said telecast producer Laura Ziskin.

Sid Ganis, the president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, pointed out, "There's no top table, no bottom table [today]."

The luncheon's format saw legendary figure like Steven Spielberg, Clint Eastwood and O'Toole exhibiting efforts with among Hollywood dominos—from make-up artists to sound mixers to special effects.

Best actress nominee Will Smith summed up the mood of the event, saying it was the highlight of the Oscars experience. AFP

SAKE WORK that is a raffle

FLOWERS, by Malang

The actress, who is also a home stylist, lives in a virtual art gallery

CARMI works on her designs in her office, which also serves as a guest room.

Carmi Martin, designing woman

By Krystal Sion Diego Jr.
Photos by Ryan Lim

HER HOME TELLS A STORY of experimentation, says actress-cum-interior designer Carmi Martin.

She has been living here since 1996, though she had to leave it for three years till 1999 while she was enrolled at the Philippine School of Interior Design.

Above the bed going into a closing at the time. "I had an empty narrow room and big," she recalls. "I decided to rent out this place and move to a smaller one near the school."

In fact, she was interesting herself, pursuing a long-cherished dream.

"My good friend (actress-comedian) Tessie Tomas encouraged me to take up design. Whenever I throw parties at home, my guests always complimented the interiors," she recounts.

"Flattered" to have the down-line her personal style.

"I love loud colors. I'm also partial to indigenous materials, like abaca," she explains.

Adorned with paintings, her home looks

HOME BODY

EARTH colors, drawn from indigenous materials like abaca, dominate the living room.

DOUBLE TAKE: In front of her portrait by Isabel Diaz, circa 1988.

At HER office hangs a portrait, circa 1982.

SHE FOUND the piece of sculpture in a department store.

COFFEE break on the terrace, surrounded by blooms and greens.

IN WOLFHT, a rice wine rack

BIRDS of paradise from Olongapo

ROSES accompany in his love vascular Phillip

She scouts art gallery.

"There are a series of still lifes by African "Malang" Santos and abstracts by Benji Arejos.

In the living room is a gift from artist Ivan Acuña. In the foyer is a "Mother and Child" piece from the backwoods of Cabiao, Carmi notes.

At the upstairs hallway is Carmi's life-size portraits by Isabel Diaz. "I've always admired her because her works are cool and casual," Carmi notes.

She says she advises clients to "invest" in art by renowned painters. "Paintings add a touch of color to the house, and appreciate in value."

She is fixated on interior designer than as actress-dress client. She's currently in the cast of the new SBN 7 series "Magic Kamikos," but she has been designing since young.

"I was working on a resort (Caruso Beach in Cavite). Neighbors asked me to do an office and bedroom/room designs for their apartments. It clicked in. Maybe because I'm a singer-my style for a single actor," she says. "I can adjust to suit my clients' personalities and preferences."

Her only sole-built Mini Quonset den and dressing room, for instance, Carmi whipped up a pop art and "Hollywood" look. (Her design was featured on her 30th anniversary invitation cards.)

"More than the money," she says, beaming, "the best reward is when clients thank me for broadening their horizons."

But Carmi's dream project is to work on a resort abroad that will feature Philippine materials and motifs and become a showcase of Filipino—"a great way to promote the country."

THE BEDROOM is a sanctuary for the busy actress-designer. Mik Duenas and Benji Arejos paintings hang in the room.

SECRETAIRE from an antique shop in Malate